RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF
MY MUSICAL LIFE

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MY MUSICAL LIFE

BY CARL VAN VECHTEN

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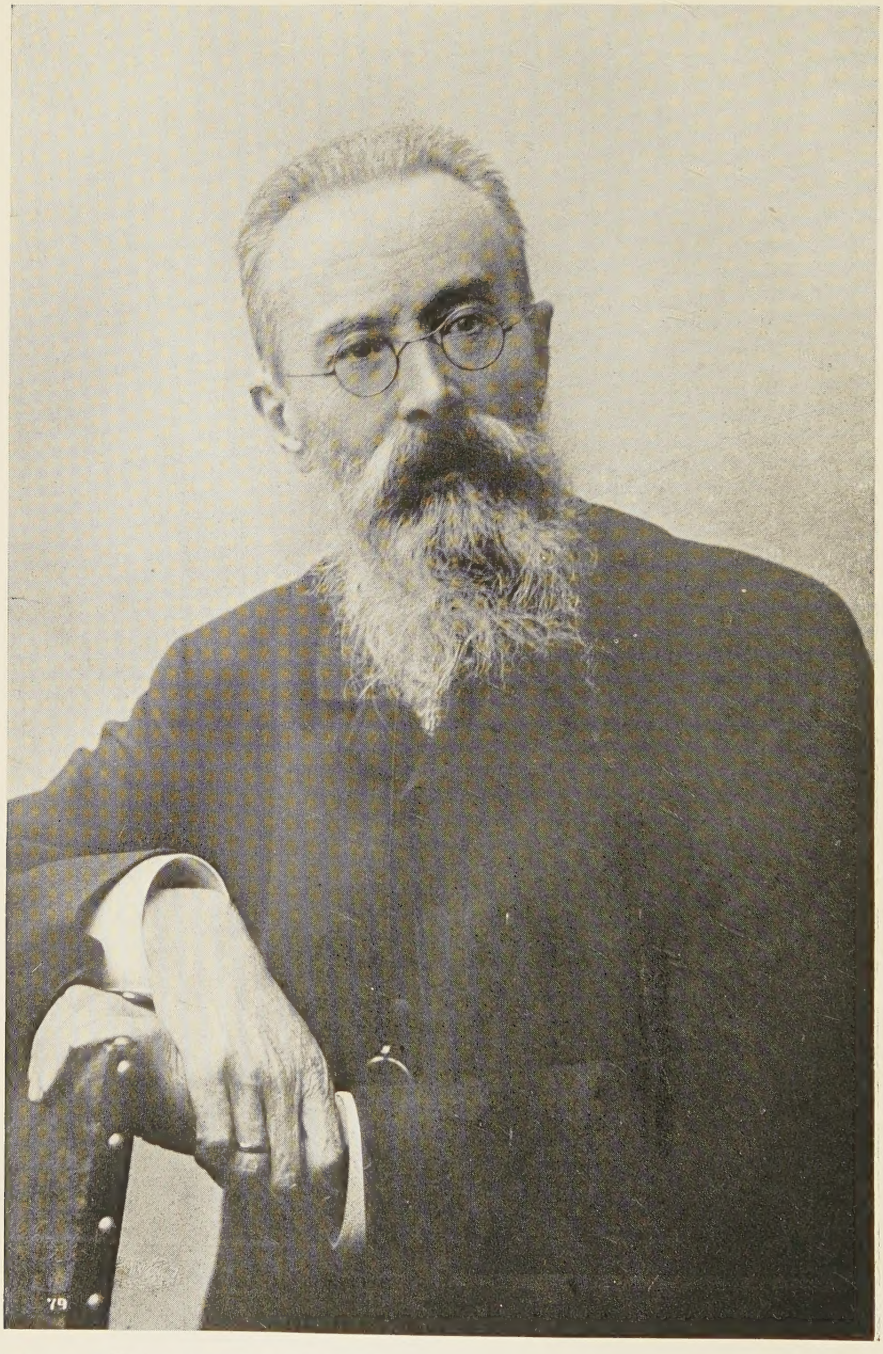

N. A. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF

NIKOLAY ANDREYEVICH RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF

MY MUSICAL LIFE

TRANSLATED FROM THE REVISED SECOND RUSSIAN EDITION BY
JUDAH A. JOFFE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CARL VAN VECHTEN

New York ALFRED A. KNOPF *Mcmxxiii*

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Published October, 1923

Set up and printed by the Vail-Ballou Co., Binghamton, N. Y.
Paper furnished by W. F. Etherington & Co., New York.
Bound by the Plimpton Press, Norwood, Mass.

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

780.92
R577
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AN INTRODUCTION

I

Obviously, this book is artlessly, even badly, written in the original, a fact which has made its translation bristle with almost insurmountable difficulties. Like most other musicians, Rimsky-Korsakoff was no writer of prose. An adept at arranging instruments in subtle juxtaposition, a skilled workman at setting folk-jewels in operatic platinum, an artist without a peer in spreading nervous shots of colour through his orchestration, when he had to deal with words, this composer limped and sweated. The ensuing pages are frequently filled with redundancies; the style is halting; the contents are often dry. There are long passages occupied with apparently unessential details, and other passages in which expansion or clearer thinking on the part of the writer would have improved the first impression made on a casual reader. Rimsky-Korsakoff was not unaware of his lack of verbal felicity, and he refers to it rather touchingly in the last lines of his manuscript. On the other hand, he was by no means blind to the great virtue that his work indubitably possesses, a virtue which sets it in a class apart from the highly-spiced mendacities of most other musical autobiographies. *My Musical Life* is stamped with the *truth*. Stumbling, halting, perspiring, Rimsky-Korsakoff put down the truth as he saw it, and this truth emerges on every page, and by cumulative effect ultimately gives his book a life and a substance which many a volume written with more regard for style entirely lacks. It is only necessary to compare this autobiography with the similar performances of Berlioz and Wagner to perceive its superiority from this point of view. If all signs of Berlioz's literary prowess or Wagner's sense of dramatic form are missing, as compensation, the reader of *My Musical Life* will search in vain for the pages of romantic fiction with which these two books are encumbered. Reading Berlioz and Wagner is doubtless an easier and more amusing pastime, but to differentiate the true from the false

in their books, it is necessary to refer to a dozen commentaries. Rimsky-Korsakoff's errors are errors of memory or taste, rather than of imagination. He may make a mistake in a date or he may express an opinion with which critical readers will not agree, but there can be no doubt that it is *his own* opinion that he expresses. He is brutally frank, not only in regard to the work of others, but also in regard to his own work. Note, for example, his disregard for the opinion of those who assign a high value to his *Capriccio Espagnol.* He sees it as it is, an instrumental show-piece, a brilliant, but superficial, display of musical fireworks, offering opportunities to the individual instruments for all sorts of virtuosity. Note how he acknowledges his indebtedness to other composers in the composition of *Sadko.* And note especially how, when he is planning to write a book on the philosophy of music, after endless explorations in the literature of the subject, suddenly awakening to the discovery that his mentality is entirely inadequate to cope with the project, he abandons it.

Out of these plodding pages, then, rises a portrait of an honest, industrious, sensitive, kindly giant, concerned only with his work, and giving all his powers, mental and physical, to it. If he writes as badly as Theodore Dreiser, he also has Dreiser's knack of sudden and acute observation, his power of sounding a deep note of truth, a power which a more fluent writer often lacks. His capacity for penetration and portraiture is frequently very great. His description of the home-life of the Borodins, for example, is a little masterpiece. Turgenyeff could have done no better.

Aside from this quality of honesty, this musical autobiography boasts two other outstanding virtues. Covering, as it does, the period between 1844 and 1906, it embraces practically the whole history of Russian art-music. Glinka and Dargomyzhski were the only important Russian composers before the "Five" and Chaykovski and Rubinstein came on the scene, and the spirit of Glinka hovers incessantly over the shoulder of Rimsky-Korsakoff as he writes, while Dargomyzhski, who did not die until 1869, actually appears in the flesh. Neither are Chaykovski and Rubinstein slighted; they were out of the movement, the movement to Russianize Russian music, but they have their importance, an importance which Rimsky-Korsakoff recognizes.[1] Towards the end of the book, the pupils of the master, Lyadoff, Aryenski, Ippolitoff-Ivan-

off, Gryechaninoff, Cheryepnin, Glazunoff, Wihtol, Tañeyeff, and Akimenko begin to emerge. There is an appreciation for Shalyapin in his early days. And if the most famous of Rimsky-Korsakoff's pupils, Igor Stravinski, is not mentioned, he is amply provided for. His work, in fact, begins at exactly the point where Rimsky-Korsakoff left off with the composition of *Le Coq d'Or.* He assumes the official robes and sceptre of the master and carries the nationalistic tradition into the twentieth century.

But the peculiar value of the book, from the point of view which at present concerns us, lies in its descriptions of the lives and methods of work of the great Five, Balakireff, Cui, Borodin, Musorgski and Rimsky-Korsakoff himself. These men, who laboured with clear convictions, uninfluenced by the hope of pecuniary gain and with small prospect of popular appreciation, may be studied at close range, and their various ideals and inconsistencies may be weighed and examined.

The other outstanding virtue of *My Musical Life* is more subtle, and yet I believe that it is just the quality which will give this book, primarily concerned with music and addressed to musicians, its interest and value for lay readers. I do not assign much importance to that definition which has it that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. My personal prejudice is rather in favour of facility. Samuel Butler has gone so far as to assert that only what is done fairly easily is done well. Nevertheless, in the case of Rimsky-Korsakoff, it must be admitted that the old definition fits like a Callot model. He was fundamentally an amateur. His profession was that of naval officer. In this he differs in no wise from his colleagues: Cui was an officer of engineers in the School of Artillery; Musorgski was a lieutenant in the Preobrazhenski Guards, and, after his retirement, worked for the government in an administrative position; Borodin was a professor of chemistry; and, late in life, Balakireff accepted a position in the St. Petersburg freight-station of the Warsaw Railroad. Like the others, Rimsky-Korsakoff had had little musical training when he began to compose. He was ignorant of musical theory; unversed in harmony

[1] In a letter, giving his views on Chaykovski, Stravinski says, in part: "Chaykovski possessed a great *melodic* power, the centre of gravity in every symphony or ballet or opera that he composed. I am absolutely indifferent to the fact that the quality of his melody is very unequal in value. The point is that he was a creator of *melody,* an extremely rare and precious gift."

and orchestration; he played the piano badly and was entirely unacquainted with the other instruments; he could not even name the common chords! Under these adverse circumstances, he composed his first works and even assumed a prominence which lifted him into the chair of a professorship at the St. Petersburg Conservatory! He admits frankly enough that he learned more than his first pupils. In teaching them, he taught himself.

The sapient Antoine de la Salle once remarked: *Celui qui commence un livre n'est que l'écolier de celui qui l'achève.*" This was certainly Rimsky-Korsakoff's experience. He, who had begun by composing instinctively, now had to learn something in order to teach others. He learned still more when he became supervisor of the Imperial Naval Bands (he once asserted "Composers and musicians of the academies do not know as much as an ordinary bandmaster"). He studied vocal counterpoint while teaching choruses at the Free Music School. He wrote a quartet to become familiar with the principles that govern chamber music. He conducted a public concert without any previous training in wielding the bâton. Finally, he wrote a treatise on harmony, studying the subject himself while he worked on it! Gradually, he acquired technique, complete mastery of his medium, and gradually he learned to know not only *how* he was doing a thing, but also *what* he was doing.

This struggle towards perfection, the need for which was realized almost from the beginning of his career, was infinitely tedious and painful. As his pen gained power, Rimsky-Korsakoff not only wrote new works, but he also frequently looked back over his past, with a view to the improvement, in the light of his later experience and education, of the works he had already given to the world. So, after long intervals, he made two new versions of his first opera, *Pskovityanka,* and the forms of the tone-poems, *Sadko* and *Antar,* which we hear today in the concert halls, are very different from those in which they were originally cast.

He was not content with improving his own music. He felt it both an obligation and a pleasure to use his superior skill in the revision and completion of the music of his dead colleagues. His first important work of this nature was the revision and editing of Glinka's operas, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and *A Life for the Tsar.* He confessed later that his zeal in this direction had been mis-

applied. He helped Cui orchestrate *William Ratcliff*. After Dargomyzhski's death, in 1869, he put *The Stone Guest* into shape. The lazy Borodin, distracted by his duties at the Medical Academy and his adventures into society, living, besides, a disordered and unsystematized life, in which meals were served and eaten at all hours, died, leaving his opera, *Prince Igor,* in a state of chaos. Whole scenes were yet unwritten; others, unorchestrated. That the opera can be performed at all is due to the energy of Rimsky-Korsakoff. As for the music of Musorgski, Rimsky-Korsakoff revised and edited it from beginning to end, even to the extent of completing and orchestrating fragmentary sketches. He has been much criticized in certain quarters for his temerity in attempting the revision of *Boris Godunoff*. It has been claimed, not unreasonably, by certain critics that Musorgski was a daring and original genius, born a hundred years before his time, and that Rimsky-Korsakoff's emendations of this score are a desecration. Well, perhaps they are right, but it must be remembered that Rimsky-Korsakoff meant it all for the best, that he did no more for his dead friend than he was constantly doing for himself, and that he made it possible for Musorgski's music drama to be performed not only in Russia but also out of it. So far, indeed, only Rimsky-Korsakoff's version of *Boris Godunoff,* a failure in Russia when produced as Musorgski wrote it, has held the stage. And the logic of his answer to his critics is unassailable. If, he hypothesizes, the future may decide his work on the Musorgski manuscripts to be an impiety, then all the future has to do is to return to the original scores. He has destroyed none of them; they all exist in their original forms in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg (or did, before the Revolution).

Thus, Rimsky-Korsakoff laboured, creating and rewriting his own music, and the music of his friends as well. When he began to compose, he was a naval officer; later, he became supervisor of the Naval Bands, taught in the Conservatory and the Imperial Chapel, conducted the Russian Symphony and other concerts, compiled volumes of folksongs, and attempted the writing of books. He also married and his wife bore him seven children. His life is built up of a million minutiae. It is this manifold activity, this consistent industry, which make his career interesting. Many pages of this autobiography, therefore, which appear to be a simple

catalogue of unimportant events, chronicled without colour or particulars, are immensely important in the bearing they have on this consistent occupational zeal.

II

Western enthusiasm for Russian music was first directed towards Rubinstein, and more especially towards Chaykovski. This was but natural, as both these men have certain affiliations with occidental style. Our knowledge of the Five came much later; now, contemporary Russian music is made known to us practically as soon as it is composed. One contemporary Russian composer, Rakhmaninoff, is, indeed, to all intents and purposes, a resident of America. Of the Five, Musorgski stands out, perhaps, as the most important figure that Russian music has yet produced, but he is not, in one sense, so typical a figure (certainly he is by no means as lovable a figure) as Rimsky-Korsakoff. Now that we know him better, the composer of *Le Coq d'Or* appears to have all the popular graces of Chaykovski without the latter's cloying sentimentality and tearful melancholy. The one is objective; the other subjective. Rimsky-Korsakoff's operas are lyric rather than dramatic, as befits work which is based on the folksong. The folksong, the Orient, and the sea were the three influences or inspirations which pursued Rimsky-Korsakoff throughout his career, and he never got very far away from any of them, although there are indications that liturgical music had some occasional effect on his work. He turned everything in his life to artistic account: his early life at sea (reflected in *Sadko* and *Shekherazada*), his trips to the Crimea, his summer vacations, when he noted down folk and bird-songs. He was always seduced by the picturesque and the exotic. He might be called, indeed, a musical Eurasian.

Little weight has been put, in critical estimates of Rimsky-Korsakoff, on his melodic gifts. These seem to me unusually pronounced, far above those possessed by most of his occidental contemporaries. *Le Coq d'Or* in itself is a mine of melody, melody which has its own special, original line, every bar of which is signed with the master's name. If it be objected that his melodies are founded on folksongs, I have only to suggest that they be compared with melodies which have a folksong basis, in the operas

of other Russian composers. It will be found that the folk-arts have all been distilled into Rimsky Korsakoff's own particular brew. He was, of course, an adept at harmonization and orchestral colour. This was, perhaps, his greatest legacy to his successors. Under the spell of the liturgical chants of the Greek church, he was using the Phrygian and Mixolydian modes long before they were revived in France. The influence of Rimsky Korsakoff and Musorgski on Debussy has been fully acknowledged. Now, curiously, the influence is flowing in the opposite direction.

All of Rimsky Korsakoff's operas may be traced back to Glinka, the Russian historical dramas to *A Life for the Tsar,* and the legendary dramas to *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* The legacy of Dargomyzhski, the principles governing the composition of *The Stone Guest,* became the source of an artistic doubt that troubled the composer of *Shekherazada* almost to the end of his life. Cheshikhin, in his survey of Russian opera, compares the Russian operatic composer to Columbus, who sailed away to find India, and discovered America, a result with which he was dissatisfied, but which left his followers more or less content. In the fifteen operas of the master, there is a great variety of style—for a time he fell somewhat under the spell of Wagner—but all of them, at heart, are Russian works, and all but three have Russian subjects, and those three are based on Russian plays by Russian poets. They are only heard at their best when performed by Russian singers. Such a work as *Snyegoorochka,* for example, a simple folk-opera, full of charm but without a breath of drama, very nearly expires in alien hands. The more brilliant *Le Coq d'Or* more successfully survives the ordeal, but even this work is immeasurably more effective when sung in Russian by Russians.

Nevertheless and notwithstanding, it is to the Russian repertory that future cosmopolitan operatic impresarii must turn for their novelties during the next two decades, I fancy, unless, perchance, they look to Spain. France and Germany and Italy are pretty well worked out and nothing especially important can be expected immediately from any of the living composers in these lands. Russia, however, is comparatively unexplored. It may take some time to develop a taste for these works (E. M. de Vogüé has written: "It is impossible to understand Russia through the reason; one can only understand Russia through

the reason; one can only understand Russia through faith"), and recent performances of *Snyegoorochka* and *Prince Igor* at the Metropolitan Opera House show that a method for their proper interpretation will have to be developed, too.

The field, beginning with Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan and Lyudmila* is rich. We can do without Dargomyzhski's *Rusalka* and Syeroff's *Rognyeda* and *Judith.* Chaykovski's *Pique Dame* and *Eugene Onyegin* have already been given here, without conspicuous success, but I have only to remind my readers that *Manon,* with Sybil Sanderson, Jean de Reszke and Pol Plançon, was a failure at the Metropolitan Opera House in the nineties. Tastes change, and these faded, melancholy scores, with their sentimental charm, may in time come into their own in this country, just as they are losing their popularity in Russia. *Boris Godunoff,* produced so brilliantly at the Metropolitan under Toscanini's direction, has gradually degenerated into as routine a performance as can be heard at that house. The interpretation, orchestral, choral, and solo, that surrounded the great Shalyapin during the season of 1921–22, would be a disgrace to the Hoftheater in Oshkosh. *Khovanshchina* remains to be given here. It is one of the masterpieces of nineteenth century lyric drama. Possibly the return of Shalyapin will effect the production of Rubinstein's *Demon.* But for the great backbone of the Russian repertory, we must turn to Rimsky-Korsakoff, and I like to believe that in a few years he will occupy the position in the Russian list of our polyglot theatres now occupied in the German by Wagner, in the French by Massenet, and in the Italian by Verdi.

Christmas Eve, Ivan the Terrible, The Tsar Saltan, The Tale of the Invisible City of Kityezh and of the Maiden Fyevroniya, Sadko, Kashchey the Deathless, A Night in May, Mlada, The Tsar's Bride, Pan Voyevoda: what picturesque delights, what seductions of melody and harmonic brilliance, the mere titles suggest!

CARL VAN VECHTEN.

New York
April 5, 1922.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST RUSSIAN EDITION

Chronicle of My Musical Life [1] justifies its name. Indeed, as an autobiography in the true sense of the word, it cannot give complete satisfaction; Nikolay Andreyevich [2] speaks in it principally,

[1] This is the full Russian title. I have dropped the awkward *Chronicle.* C. V. V.

[2] In transliterating Russian proper names for *English-speaking readers* I have aimed to make the result as phonetic as is consistent with usual English spelling. All finer nuances of Russian pronunciation have been disregarded: strictly phonetic transcription is impossible without additional characters, nor would it be desirable (in this book), even if it were possible. A definite method of transliteration once adopted, the main task was consistency in applying it.

Consonants

1. *ch,* as in English church: Chaykovski, Cheryepnin; not Tschaikovski, Tchérepnine, spellings borrowed from the German and the French, respectively, where *tsch* and *tch* represent the same sound as the English *ch.*
2. *kh,* as in German Bach or Scotch Loch: Mikhayil, Tikhvin, Ashkharumoff.
3. *ks,* not *x,* is used: Alyekseyevich.
4. *s,* as in English six.
5. *sh,* as in English: Shalyapin, not Schaliapin (as in German), or Chaliapine (as in French).
6. *shch,* as in English fish-chum or in the colloquial pronunciation of mischief: Shcherbachoff, not Schtscherbatschew, (as in German) or Chtcherbatcheff (as in French); Khovanshchina.
7. *ts,* as in English pots, catsup: Tsar, Famintsyn, not Czar, Tzar, Famintzin.
8. *w* does not exist in Russian: Chaykovski, Gryechaninoff, not Tschaikowski, Gretschaninow.
9. *z,* as in English: Zaremba, Azanchevski.
10. *zh,* as z in seizure or s in vision, pleasure: Dargomyzhski, Lodyzhenski; Nizhinski, not Dargomyjski, Lodijenski, Nijinsky, as in French transliterations.
11. *y,* before a vowel, between vowels, or after a vowel, has exactly the same *consonantal* value as in English in like positions: Yakushkin, Bayan, Voyin, Viy. When written after a consonant and followed by a vowel, y represents the palatalization (softening) of the preceding consonant; Lyadoff, Lyudmila, Rognyeda, Bortnyanski, Rubyets, Syeroff (as in Spanish *ll, ñ* or close to English million, canyon.

Vowels

1. *a,* as in fast, can't, ask.
2. *e,* as in get, men.
3. *i,* close to English *i* in machine, police, without the afterglide.
4. *o,* as commonly heard in often, nor, or.
5. *u,* usually *oo,* as in English book.
6. *y,* as a vowel sound, closely resembles the thicker variety of short *i* heard in the English word milk: Stolypin, Lodyzhenski, Kromy.

JUDAH A. JOFFE.

even almost exclusively (save for the chapter on his cruise abroad), of events of his *musical* life. But even his musical life is described, in certain passages, with insufficient detail; this is especially noticeable at the end of the *Chronicle*. In fact, beginning with the last half decade of the nineteenth century, the narrative grows ever more and more succinct,—as if Nikolay Andreyevich had hurried to complete his work by a set date. Nevertheless the *Chronicle* contains very valuable biographical material, and this induced me to hasten its publication.

In preparing the *Chronicle of my Musical Life* for the press, I was guided by what Nikolay Andreyevich had stated more than once during his lifetime, namely: When after his death the *Chronicle* is published, first, certain abridgments were to be made as at present necessary; secondly, to polish the style, here and there: thirdly, certain dates were to be checked up as not having been quite accurately established. Thanks to V. V. Yastryebtseff's kind cooperation I have checked up the dates, as far as possible. Besides, for the reader's convenience, I have introduced a division into chapters. The original manuscript contains no such sub-division, but here and there marginal headings occur which I utilized to make the chapter headings. Wherever no such marginal headings existed, I had to make the chapter headings myself.

The frank and severe judgments to be found in the *Chronicle* regarding some dead persons and some still living cannot, it seems to me, offend any one, because Nikolay Andreyevich passes judgments equally severe and frank, if not more so, on his own acts and musical compositions.

The *Chronicle* was written during various years, often at long intervals; thus, the story of the end of the summer of 1893 was written ten years after the description of the beginning and middle of the same period. All dates found in the manuscript, I have set down as footnotes in the order in which they occur in the manuscript. It must be mentioned that frequently no record of year and month occurs for a long time.

The *Chronicle* has been brought down to August, 1906. In its last lines so filled with secret sadness, there is mentioned a diary which Nikolay Andreyevich had intended to begin. But this intention was left unfulfilled after all. In a thick, bound blank book were found six entries: four under the year 1904 and

two under the year 1907. The first entry, quoted in its entirety, reads as follows: "In the last fifteen years I made up my mind, on several occasions, to begin my diary, but I always put it off and put it off. This time I had intended to begin it on January 1 of this year; but never did so after all. Finally, I took a firm resolution to begin writing it on March 6, when I turned sixty. Today, on the eve of that event, I shall narrate in brief all that has happened in my musical life since the beginning of this year; and beginning with tomorrow I shall carry on my *Chronicle* in the form of a diary." After this note comes the narrative of events of his musical life (beginning with January, 1904) which are described in the *Chronicle* as well, and a few pages further occurs the caption *"Diary"* after which follow two notes of March 6 and 9 of the same year. Entered in the back of the same blank book were found two more brief notes of November 28 and 29, 1907, but nothing else.

Thus Nikolay Andreyevich has not touched at all upon the last year and a half of his life. The work of composing *Zolotoy Pyetooshok* (The Golden Cockerel) the production of *Kityezh* at the Mariinski Theatre and his trip to Paris in the spring of 1907 have been mentioned nowhere. Why he never described these interesting events of his musical life is unknown. I think it may be explained by the fact that while composing *The Golden Cockerel,* Nikolay Andreyevich was, as always, absorbed in the composition, gave himself up to it completely, and, as a result, could not occupy himself with anything else. The whole *Chronicle* was written in the interims between musical compositions. But when his work on *Zolotoy Pyetooshok* was over, his final illness had begun to steal over him. With it, his former healthy and buoyant frame of mind gradually faded; and he showed no further desire to continue the *Chronicle.* After December, 1907, his illness became very marked; shortness of breath precluded any brisk walking; a feeling of fatigue hindered all work; and at last all this led to paroxysms of asthma in April and to death, June 8, 1908.

N. Rimskaya-Korsakova.

St. Petersburg
January 12, 1908.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND RUSSIAN EDITION

The Second Edition of the *Chronicle of my Musical Life* differs from the first, (published in March 1909 and sold out by July) only in the correction of the detected misprints and oversights, as well as in slight additions to the text. There have now been introduced also words and phrases inadvertently omitted, as well as Appendix V, which was not included in the first edition. In Appendices VI and VII there have been given Nikolay Andreyevich's three open letters to the newspaper *Roos'* of 1905, which he mentions in the *Chronicle*. These letters refer to his dismissal from the Conservatory; and, it seems to me, are of considerable interest. Otherwise, the second edition corresponds exactly with the first.

N. Rimskaya-Korsakova.

October 8, 1909.

MY MUSICAL LIFE

CHAPTER I

1844–56

Childhood years in Tikhvin. The first manifestations of musical abilities. Studying music. Reading. Inclination towards the sea and maritime service. First attempts at composition. Leaving for St. Petersburg.

I was born in the town of Tikhvin on March 6, 1844.[1] For a long time before that, my father had been on the retired list and had lived in his own house, with my mother and uncle Pyotr Petrovich Rimsky-Korsakoff, my father's brother. Our house stood almost at the end of the town, on the bank of the Tikhvinka River, on the other bank of which, opposite us, was situated the Tikhvin Monastery.

During the first year of my existence, my parents went to St. Petersburg for a short stay with my father's brother, Nikolay Petrovich Rimsky-Korsakoff, and took me along. After their return, I lived without a break in Tikhvin until 1856.

From early childhood I manifested musical abilities. We had an old piano; my father played by ear rather decently, though with no particular fluency. His repertory included a number of melodies from the operas of his time; thus I recall the well-known romanza from Méhul's *Joseph,* the aria *Di tanti palpiti* from Rossini's *Tancredi,* the funeral march from Spontini's *La Vestale,* Papagena's aria from *Il Flauto Magico.* My father sang frequently, playing his own accompaniments. For the greater part, his vocal numbers were some moralizing verses. I recall, for instance, the following:

Remember all of ye, who fain
By reading would enlight your mind:

[1] In Russia, the Julian Calendar, established by Julius Cæsar in 46 B.C. and adopted by the Council of Nicæa is 325 A.D., still remains in force. This reckoning is twelve (in the nineteenth century; thirteen in the twentieth) days behind that of the rest of Europe and America, which long ago adopted the Gregorian Calendar. Thus January 1 in Russia is now January 14 elsewhere. C. V. V.

Read not too many books in vain,
Lest ye still greater darkness find!

Verses of this nature were sung by him to the tunes of various old operas. According to the accounts of my father and my mother, Pavel Petrovich, my uncle on my paternal side, was possessed of enormous musical talent and played entire overtures and other pieces very well and fluently, by ear, though unfamiliar with music. My father, it would seem, did not possess such brilliant abilities, but, at all events, had a fine ear, a passable memory and played neatly. My mother, too, had a very fine ear. The following fact is interesting: Whatever she remembered, she was in the habit of singing more slowly than was proper; thus the melody *Kak mat' oobili* (When they killed mother,—from Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar*), she always sang in the adagio tempo. I mention this, because it seems to me that this peculiarity of hers was passed on to me. In her youth, my mother had taken piano lessons, but gave them up afterwards and never played at all within my recollection.

The first indications of musical talent appeared in me at a very early age. I was not fully two years old when I clearly distinguished all the tunes that my mother sang to me. Later, when three or four years of age, I beat a toy drum in perfect time, while my father played the piano. Often my father would suddenly change the tempo and rhythm on purpose, and I at once followed suit. Soon afterward I began to sing quite correctly whatever my father played, and often I sang along with him. Later on I myself began to pick out on the piano the pieces and accompaniments I had heard him perform and, having learned the names of the notes, I could, from an adjoining room, recognize and name any note of the piano. When I was six, or thereabouts, they began to give me piano lessons. This task was undertaken by an aged dame, a certain Yekatyerina Nikolayevna Unkovskaya, a neighbour of ours. At this moment I am utterly unable to judge either how musical she was, or how well she could play, or how good her method of instruction was. Probably it was all extremely mediocre, in the usual small-town fashion. Nevertheless, under her tuition I did play scales, easy exercises and

some pieces. I remember also that I played all of them badly, carelessly and was poor at keeping time.

My abilities were not confined to music; they were excellent in other respects as well. Reading was child's play to me; I learned to read without being taught. My memory was splendid: whole pages of what my mother read to me I remembered word for word. Arithmetic I began to grasp very quickly. It cannot be said that I was fond of music at that time: I endured it and took barely sufficient pains with my studies. Occasionally, to amuse myself, I sang and played the piano, of my own accord; but I do not recall that music made a strong impression on me at that time. Perhaps it was because I was not very impressionable and possibly because, at that time, I had as yet heard nothing that could really produce a strong impression on a child.

Some eighteen months or two years after I had begun to study under Yekatyerina Nikolayevna, she refused to give me further lessons, finding that I needed a better teacher than herself. Then I began to study with Olga Nikitishna (I don't remember her family name), a governess in the house of the Fel family, who were very good friends of ours. I do not know, but it seemed to me that she played splendidly. Under her direction I made some progress. Among the pieces which she gave me to play, there were some Beyer transcriptions of Italian operas, a piece based on a theme from a ballet of Burgmüller's and also a Beethoven Sonata (D-major) for four-hands, which I liked. I remember that among other things I played as duets with her, Marx's potpourri on melodies from *Le Prophète* and *Les Diamants de la Couronne*. Olga Nikitishna taught me for a year or a year and a half; then I was taken in hand by her pupil, Olga Fyeliksovna Fel, who also played sufficiently well. Of the pieces of that period I recall the *Otello* (Rossini's) overture for two-hands (played in a tempo much slower than was proper), the A-major Scherzo of Beethoven's A-major Sonata, Op. 2; a potpourri from *Les Huguenots* for two-hands; a fantasy on melodies from *Rigoletto* (I do not recall whose, but it was easy); a fantasy on melodies from Lorttzing's *Zar und Zimmermann,* and the overture of *La Vestale* for four-hands. I was taught by Olga Fyeliksovna for some three years, that is until the age of twelve (1856). It

seemed to me that she played rather well; but one day I was struck by the playing of a lady (I do not recall her name), a chance visitor in Tikhvin, whom I saw at Olga Fyeliksovna's; she played Henselt's *Si oiseau j'étais.* At the age of eleven or twelve I often had occasion to play four- and eight-hand pieces at the house of our friends, the Kalinskis. I remember that they were visited then by Colonel of Engineers Vorobyoff who was considered a fine pianist in Tikhvin. We played the *Otello* overture for eight-hands. Of other instrumental music I heard nothing else in Tikhvin; the town boasted neither violinists nor amateur cellists. For a long time the Tikhvin ballroom orchestra consisted of a violin, on which a certain Nikolay used to scrape out polkas and quadrilles, and of a tambourine which was artistically played by Kooz'ma, a house-painter by trade and a heavy drinker. A few years before I had left town several Jews made their appearance (violin, cymbalon and tambourine), who put Nikolay and Kooz'ma in the shade and became the fashionable musicians.

As to vocal music I heard only one Tikhvin girl, Baranova, who sang the song *Chto ty spish, muzhichok?* (Why slumberest thou, dear Muzhik?). Then, besides my father's singing, there remains the church music, i. e. the singing in the convent and the monastery. At the nunnery the singing was of no great account, but at the friary, as far as I recall, they sang tolerably well. I was fond of some of the Cherubim choruses and other compositions by Bortnyanski;[1] also of his concertos *Gloria in Excelsis,* and, of the plain chant,—*Benedice, anima mea; Cruci tuae; Lux silens,* —after vespers. Church singing, amid the beautiful surroundings of the archimandrite's divine service, produced a deeper impression on me than did secular music, although, generally speaking, I was not an impressionable boy. Of all the compositions I was acquainted with I derived the keenest pleasure from the Orphan's song and the duet from Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar.* The music of these we had at the house, and once I took it into my head to

[1] Dmitri Styepanovich Bortnyanski, according to Mrs. Newmarch (*The Russian Opera*) was born in 1751. He began his career as a chorister in the Court Choir, where he attracted the attention of Galuppi. In 1769, Bortnyanski joined the Italian composer in Venice and remained there until 1779 when he was recalled to Russia. He is now best known as a composer of sacred music, some of his compositions being still in use in the services of the Orthodox Church, but he also wrote four operas, two to Italian and two to French texts. C. V. V.

play them both through. My mother told me then that they were the finest numbers in the opera. She remembered *A Life for the Tsar* poorly, and I do not even know whether she had ever seen it on the stage.

My uncle sang several fine Russian songs: *Sharlatarla from Partarla; Nye son moyu golovushku klonit,* (It is not sleep that bows my dear head down) ; *Kak po travkye po muravkye* (How on the grass, the green sward), etc. He remembered these songs from childhood days when he lived in the village Nikol'skoye (of the Tikhvin district) which belonged at that time to my grandfather. My mother, too, sang some Russian songs. I loved these songs, but heard them comparatively seldom from the people, as we lived in town where I nonetheless had the opportunity, year in, year out to witness the "seeing out" of Butter-week [1] with the procession and effigy. As for country-life, I had three glimpses of it in my childhood when visiting Bochevo and Pechnyevo (estates of the Timireffs) and the Brovtsyns (I do not recall the name of the village).

I was a reserved boy, although I skylarked and ran about, climbed roofs and trees and flew into tantrums for my mother, rolling on the floor and bawling whenever I was punished. I was very inventive at games, and would play all alone for hours at a stretch. Harnessing up chairs for horses and playing driver, I held long conversations with myself, in a make-believe dialogue between coachman and master. Like many children I was fond of imitating what I had seen; putting on spectacles made of paper, or taking apart and assembling a watch, because I had seen a watchmaker doing that. Aping my elder brother Voyin Nikolayevich, who was at that time a naval lieutenant and used to send us letters from abroad, I fell in love with the sea, conceived a passion for it, without ever having seen it. I read Dumont d'Urville's voyage around the world, rigged up a brig, played sea-voyager, and once, after reading the book *The Wrecking of the Frigate Ingermanland,* I retained in my memory a multitude of technical sea terms. While reading Zelyony's lectures on astronomy (I was ten or eleven) I sought out in the sky, with the aid of a star-map, most of the northern hemisphere constellations, which I know perfectly to this day. Among books, in addition to those men-

[1] Butter-week is the week before Lent. C. V. V.

tioned, I liked Gabriel Ferry's novel *The Forest Vagabond* and a great deal in Chistyakoff and Razin's "Children's Magazine," especially the story *Svyatopolk, Prince of Lipetsk.* While playing in the garden, I often acted whole scenes from *The Forest Vagabond.*

I have already said that I was not particularly fond of music or even if I was, it scarcely ever made a strong impression on me: certainly not compared with my beloved books. But for the sake of play, for the sake of aping in the same way as I used to take apart and assemble the watch, I tried at times to compose music and write notes. With my musical and good general abilities for study, I soon succeeded, by my own efforts, in passably jotting down on paper what I had played on the piano, and in observing the proper division into bars. After a while, without first playing it over on the piano, I began to form a mental image of what was written in notes. I was eleven years old, when I conceived the idea of composing a duet for voices with piano accompaniment (probably under the influence of Glinka's duet). I took the words from a children's book; the poem, I think, was called *Butterfly.* I succeeded in writing this duet. I recall that it was sufficiently coherent. Of my other compositions of that time I remember only that I began to write some sort of overture for the piano for two-hands. It began *adagio*, then passed to *andante*, then to *moderato*, then to *allegretto*, *allegro* and was to end *presto.* I did not write this composition to the very end, but took keen pleasure, at that time, in the form I had invented.

Of course, my teachers took no part in my essays in composition, nor did they even know of them. I felt abashed to speak of my composing, and my parents looked upon it all as a mere prank, a sport,—and, for the time being, such it really was. But of becoming a musician I never dreamed; I was not studying music with any particular diligence, and was fascinated by the thought of becoming a seaman. My parents wanted to send me off to the Marine Corps, as my uncle Nikolay Petrovich and my brother were in the navy.

At the end of July 1856, for the first time in my life, I took leave of my mother and my uncle; my father took me to St. Petersburg, to the Marine Corps.[1]

[1] Written in 1876.

CHAPTER II

1856–61

The Golovins. The Marine Corps. Getting acquainted with operatic and symphony music. Ulikh's and Kanille's lessons.

On arriving in St. Petersburg, we went to stay with P. N. Golovin, a schoolmate and friend of my brother's.

Having placed me in the Marine Corps, my father went back to Tikhvin. Every Saturday I used to go to P. N. Golovin's, who lived with his mother, and there I stayed till Sunday evening. In the corps I gained a good footing among my classmates by a show of resistance to those who tormented me as a freshman, and I was left in peace. However, I had no quarrels with anybody, and my classmates liked me. Alyeksey Kooz'mich Davydoff was the director of the Marine Corps. Flogging was in full sway: every Saturday before leave was granted, all the pupils were assembled in the vast dining-hall, where the diligent students were rewarded with apples according to the number of the marks of 10 they had received in the various subjects during the week, while the lazy ones, that is those who had received 1 or 0 in any subject, were flogged. The so-called *starikashestvo* (grandad-system) was in vogue among the students. *The old man,* a pupil repeatedly left back in the class, held the foremost place, was the head of the class, with the title of *grandad.* He bullied weaker pupils and occasionally compelled even his equals in physical strength to perform services for him, etc. In my time, in our second company, there was one such, a certain Balk, of eighteen, who went to the length of revolting acts; forced his classmates to shine his boots, took their money and bread-rolls, spat in their faces, etc. However, he did not annoy me, and all went well. I was good in conduct and my studies went well, too. Somehow music was forgotten by me at the time, it did not interest me, although I began to take piano lessons with one Ulikh, on Sundays. Ulikh was a cellist at the

Aleksandrinski Theatre, but a poor pianist. The lessons went on in the most ordinary fashion. In the summer of 1857 I went on furlough to see my parents, and I remember with what regret and even grief I left Tikhvin to return to the Corps late in August.

During the school year of 1857–58, I fell down in my studies, my conduct was poorer and once I was under arrest in the school lock-up. My music lessons continued; I was more or less indifferent, but a love for music did manifest itself in me. I went to the opera twice with the Golovins: at the Russian Opera I saw Flotow's *Indra,* at the Italian Opera—*Lucia di Lammermoor.* The latter made a deep impression on me. I carried away something in my memory, tried to play it on the piano, even listened to street-organs playing snatches of that opera, attempted to write some notes; truly to "write notes," but not compose.

My elder brother returned from a long sea-voyage and was appointed commander of the target-practice ship *Prokhor.* He took me with him on a summer voyage. We were stationed all summer long at Revel, practising target-shooting. My brother was trying to accustom me to sea-service; he taught me to handle a boat under sail, and assigned me to duty. I lived in his cabin, away from the other pupils. Standing on the ratline under the mizzen-top, while the shrouds were being made taut, I fell into the sea,—fortunately into the sea and not on the deck. I swam out, was pulled into a boat and got off with a scare and a slight bruise (probably when I struck the water), but I had created a big rumpus and naturally had frightened my brother. At the end of the summer I went to Tikhvin on leave.

During the school year 1858–59 my studies were altogether inconsequential, my conduct tolerable. At the opera I heard *Robert le Diable, Der Freischütz, Marta, I Lombardi, La Traviata.* I grew extremely fond of *Robert le Diable.* The Golovins had a piano score edition of this opera and I used to play it. Orchestration (although that word was unknown to me) appeared to me something mysterious and alluring. To this day I remember the impression of the sounds of the French horns at the beginning of Alice's romanza (E-major). I imagine I saw *Lucia di Lammermoor* then a second time and worked at arranging the finale of that opera from four-hands to two, so as

to make it easier to play. I also made other arrangements of the same kind, but which, exactly,—I do not recall. During the same year I heard *A Life for the Tsar* (Bulakhova, Lyeonova, Bulakhoff, Pyetroff, conductor—Lyadoff). This opera threw me into a veritable ecstasy, though I carried away with me very little. But I know, that in addition to the purely melodious numbers: *Nye tomi rodimy* (Do not tax me, father!), *Ty priydyosh, moya zarya* (Thou wilt come, my dawn) etc., my attention was attracted by the overture and the orchestral introduction to the chorus: *My na rabotoo v lyes* (We're off to the woods to work). The Italian opera of that time was in full bloom; the singers were: Tamberlik, Calzolari, Bosio, La Grua, etc. I heard Rossini's *Otello, Il Barbiere di Siviglia; Don Giovanni.*

The Golovins and their circle were lovers of Italian opera. They considered Rossini an especially serious and great composer. Listening to their conversations, I thought it my duty to take it all on faith, but secretly I felt a greater attraction for *Robert le Diable* and *A Life for the Tsar.* They used to say in the circle of the Golovins that *Robert le Diable* and *Les Huguenots* were beautiful and "learned" music. *A Life for the Tsar* they also approved, but of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* they said that even though very "learned," the opera was slighter than his *A Life for the Tsar* and inferior to it and that, generally speaking, it was a bore. Ulikh said that *A Life for the Tsar* was "vairy koot." These discussions of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* were occasioned by questions from me. Of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* the Golovins had the music—*Choodny son* (Wonderful Dream), *Lyubvi roskoshnaya zvyezda* (Resplendent Star of Love) and *O polye!* (O, Field!), which I found and played through. These excerpts from the unfamiliar opera struck my fancy deeply and roused my interest to a high degree. It seems to me that in them I felt, for the first time in my life, the immediate beauty of *harmony.* I questioned P. N. Golovin regarding *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and obtained the opinion mentioned above.

With Ulikh I played four-hands the march from *Le Prophète* and the *Hebriden* overture; I liked both of them. Of any other symphonic music I had no idea. During this year, I endeavoured to compose some things, partly in my head, partly at the piano, but nothing would come of it: they all ended in nothing but

fragments and vague chimeras. Still the work of transcription from two- to four-hands continued (I was transcribing something from *Ruslan and Lyudmila*). With Ulikh I learned two Beethoven sonatas—one with the French horn (F-major), the other with violin (also in F-major). Ulikh brought to the house a horn player (Gerner, I think, still a young man at the time) and the violinist Mich. I played those sonatas with them. I played piano duets with Golovin's sister, P. N. Novikova.

The summer of 1859 I spent again with my brother, on the ship *Prokhor*. In the school years of 1859–60, 1860–61, I was a mediocre student, and went sailing in the summer on the ship *Vola* under the command of Tobshchin. My passion for music was developing. In the season of 1859–60 I attended the symphony concerts given by the Director of the Imperial Theatres at the Grand Theatre, under the leadership of Karl Schubert. I also heard one of the University concerts. At the Grand Theatre I heard the *Pastoral Symphony, The Midsummer Night's Dream,* Glinka's *Jota Aragonesa,* the entr'acte from *Lohengrin,* Liszt's *Prometheus;* the rest I don't remember. At the University I heard Beethoven's Second Symphony, Schubert's *Erlkönig* (sung by La Grua). At the Opera I heard Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto; Les Huguenots;* somebody's *Dmitri Donskoy,*[1] *Marta; Der Freischütz;* once more *A Life for the Tsar,* and, finally, *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* With P. N. Novikova I played four-hands Beethoven's symphonies, overtures of Mendelssohn, Mozart etc. In this way I developed a passion for symphonic music. I took delight in Beethoven's Second Symphony, especially the end of its *Larghetto* (with the flute), when I heard it at the University; the *Pastoral Symphony* enrapured me; the *Jota Aragonesa* simply dazzled me. I was in love with Glinka. *The Midsummer Night's Dream,* too, I adored. Wagner and Liszt I did not understand—*Prometheus* left on me the impression of something vague and queer. With the pocket-money I possessed I began to buy piecemeal single numbers of *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* The list of single numbers printed on the cover of Stellovski's edition lured me on with a sort of mysterious power. The Persian chorus and the dances at Nayina's I liked beyond words. I remember that I arranged the melody of the Persian chorus for the cello and

[1] Rubinstein's (St. Petersburg 1852)? J. A. J.

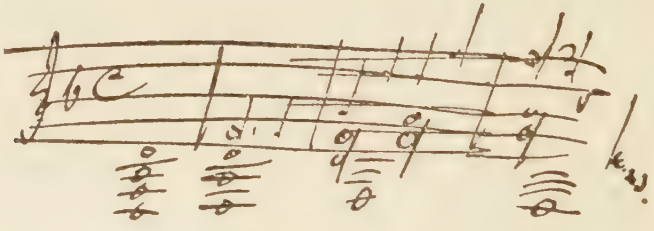
gave it to O. P. Denisyeff (a relative of the Golovins) to play, while I played the rest on the piano. Denisyeff played out of tune, and we got nowhere. For some reason, I arranged the *Kamarinskaya* [1] for violin and piano and played it with Mich. That very year, as already mentioned, I heard *Ruslan and Lyudmila* at the Mariinski Theatre and was thrown into indescribable rapture. My brother made me a present of the complete opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* for piano alone, which had just been published in that form. While staying at the Corps one Sunday (as a punishment for some misdemeanour we were not allowed to go home), I grew impatient and, giving the watchman ten rubles that I had in my possession, I sent him out to buy me the complete piano score of *A Life for the Tsar.* I eagerly scanned its pages, recalling my impressions of the stage performance. As will be seen from the above, I had already become acquainted with a considerable quantity of good music; but my greatest liking was reserved for Glinka. However, I found no support in the opinions of the people who surrounded me at the time.

As a musician I was then a young dilettante—in the full sense of the word. I studied somewhat lazily under Ulikh, improving but little as a pianist; but I was extremely fond of playing four-hands. I had heard no singing (except opera), quartet playing or good piano playing. I had no idea of the theory of music, had not heard the name of a single chord, was unfamiliar with the names of the intervals. I had no thorough knowledge of scales and their structure, though I could figure them out. And yet I attempted to *orchestrate* the entr'acte of *A Life for the Tsar* from the instruments mentioned in the piano arrangement. Naturally, it was a deuce of a result! Seeing that I was getting nowhere, I went twice to Stellovski's store and asked them to show me the orchestral score of *A Life for the Tsar* which they had. Half of it I could not make out at all, but the Italian names of the instruments, the superscriptions *col* and *come sopra,* the different clefs and the transposition of the French horns and other instruments—had some mysterious charm for me. In brief, I was a sixteen-year-old *child,* who passionately loved music and *played with it.* Between my *dilettante* studies and the real

[1] *Kamarinskaya* is a fantasia for orchestra by Glinka, founded on a nuptial song and traditional dance he had heard in his native village. C. V. V.

work of a young musician, say even of a conservatory pupil, there was almost as much of a gap as that between a child's playing at soldiers and wars, and actual military science. At that time nobody had taught me anything, nobody had guided my steps. And it would have been so simple, if only there had been the person to do it! Still, Ulikh realized my musical talent and, of his own accord, refused to give me lessons, saying that I ought to go to a real pianist. F. A. Kanille was engaged as my teacher, I don't know at whose recommendation. In the fall of 1860 I began to take piano lessons from him.

Kanille opened my eyes to many things. With what rapture I learned from him that *Ruslan and Lyudmila* really was *the best opera in the world,* that Glinka was a supreme genius. Until then I had felt it intuitively,—now I heard it from a *real* musician. He acquainted me with Glinka's *Prince Kholmski,*[1] *A Night in Madrid,* some of Bach's fugues, Beethoven's quartet in E flat major (Op. 127), Schumann's compositions and many other things. He was a good pianist; I heard from him the first really good piano playing. When I played duets with him, we got good results, although I was a rather indifferent player, because he played the *primo* part. Having learned of my passion for music, he gave me the idea of devoting myself to composition. The task he set me was to write an *Allegro* for a sonata after the pattern of Beethoven's First Sonata (F-minor). I composed something in D-minor.



He set me to writing variations on a certain theme, with Glinka's variations on *Sryedi doliny rovniya* (In the midst of a smooth valley) as a model. He gave me choral melodies to harmonize,

[1] A tragedy by Kookol'nik, for which Glinka had composed incidental music. Chaykovski, by no means an indulgent critic of Glinka, says of this work: "Glinka here shows himself to be one of the greatest symphonic composers of his day. Many touches in *Prince Kholmski* recall the brush of Beethoven." C. V. V.

but did not explain the simplest methods of procedure; I got into snarls and the results were poor. Nor did he give me sufficiently clear explanations as to the form of composition. Through him I came to know something about orchestral scores, and the transposition of French horns was explained to me by him. I tried to arrange the *Jota Aragonesa* for four-hands from the orchestral score; I was getting on fairly well, but did not finish it for some reason or other. He did not give sufficient time to teaching me piano playing; though I made some progress, it was nothing to boast of. He, too, acquainted me with Balakireff's overture to *King Lear* and I conceived the highest respect and awe for Balakireff's name, which I had not heard of before.

In September 1861, my brother, finding that I played well enough, decided I no longer needed lessons. He did not attach any importance to my passion for music, and thought I should join the navy. This caused me grief. But Kanille told me to come to him every Sunday and that he would keep on teaching me. I went to his house on Sunday with the keenest delight. Piano lessons, in the proper sense of the word, ceased, somehow, but the composition lessons were continued and, in spite of the lack of system, I made some progress. In the nocturne (B flat minor) I even invented some beautiful harmonic successions. I also composed a funeral march in D-minor, a scherzo in C-minor for four-hands and something like the beginning of a symphony in E flat minor. But all of this was most elementary: I had no idea of counterpoint; in harmony I did not know even the fundamental rule of leading the seventh downward nor did I know the names of the chords. Picking up a few crumbs from Glinka's, Beethoven's and Schumann's compositions which I played, I fell to cooking up, with considerable labour, something thin and elementary. Kanille did not develop in me a taste for writing melodies, and yet it would have been more normal had I composed "cruel" songs instead of labouring with symphonic travail.

In 1860–61 I began to manifest musical activity even within the walls of our school. Among my schoolmates there proved to be some lovers of music and choral singing. I led the chorus formed by them. We rehearsed the first male chorus from *A Life for the Tsar,* together with the finale of the opera, which,

I think, I had arranged or at least somewhat adapted for performance by a male chorus alone. We also sang *Hoy ty Dnyepr* (Hoy, thou Dnyepr) from Vyerstovski's *Askold's Tomb,*[1] etc. For some unknown reason, choral singing was tabooed by the school authorities, and we used to meet secretly in unoccupied classrooms; we once paid dearly for that too. We took no part in the church choir. By that time a deep love for *A Life for the Tsar* and partly also for *Ruslan and Lyudmila* had developed among my schoolmates. I contributed a great deal to the growth of this affection, by frequently playing, in the evening, excerpts from these operas on the harmoniflute [2] belonging to one of my schoolmates—Prince A. D. Myshetski, an ardent music-lover. Very often the bellows were blown by K. A. Iryetski, brother of Natalya Aleksandrovna Iryetskaya, at present professor of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. One of my schoolmates, N. I. Skrydloff, the hero of the Russo-Turkish War, used to sing tenor. I made the acquaintance of his family. His mother was an excellent singer; I visited them frequently and accompanied her on the piano. At that time I came to know many of Glinka's songs, partly through the Skrydloffs, partly by myself. Besides Glinka's songs, I also became acquainted with some songs of Dargomyzhski, Varlamoff [3] and others. I recollect having composed then the songs beginning with the words *Vykhodi ko mnye sinyora* (Come out to me, Signora!), something like a barcarole, rather tuneful, even in the pseudo-Italian style. Once, in November 1861, Kanille came to the Corps, on a Monday, and announced that the following Sunday he would take me to Balakireff's house. How pleased I was! [4]

[1] An opera by Alyeksey Nikolayevich Vyerstovski (1799–1862), which attained such popularity that it reached six hundred performances in St. Petersburg and Moscow alone, during the first twenty-five years of its existence. C. V. V.

[2] Harmoniflute, einer der vielen Namen der ersten Harmoniums. Riemann (1919). Cf. Mendel V. 54. J. A. J.

[3] Alyeksandr Yegorovich Varlamoff (1801–1848) wrote 223 songs (published in twelve books by Stellovski), of which one, *The Red Sarafan,* has become world-renowned, and has frequently been mistaken for a Russian folk-song. C. V. V.

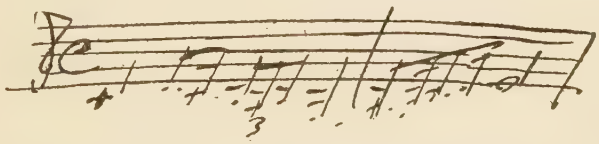
[4] Written in 1887–8.

CHAPTER III

1861–62

Acquaintance with Balakireff and his circle. The Symphony. My father's death. Reminiscences of him. Graduation as a midshipman. Detailed to sail in foreign waters.

From the very first Balakireff produced an enormous impression upon me. A magnificent pianist, playing everything from memory; endowed with bold opinions, new ideas and, last but not least, a gift of composition, which I already revered! At our first meeting, my scherzo in C-minor was shown to him; he approved it, except for a few critical observations. He was likewise shown my nocturne and other things, as well as fragmentary materials for the symphony (E flat minor). He insisted that I set to composing the symphony. I was enraptured. At his house I met Cui and Musorgski, of whom I had known by hearsay from Kanille. Balakireff was then orchestrating the overture of Cui's *The Prisoner of the Caucasus.* With what delight I listened to *real business* discussions of instrumentation, part-writing, etc.! They also played Musorgski's Allegro in C-major for four-hands:



which I liked. I do not remember what Balakireff played of his own music; I think it was the last entr'acte from *King Lear.* And besides, how much talking there was about current musical matters! All at once I had been plunged into a new world, unknown to me, where I found myself among real, talented musicians, whom I had formerly only heard of, in the society of my dilettante friends. That was truly a strong impression.

During November and December, I visited Balakireff every Saturday evening, often meeting there Musorgski and Cui. There also I made the acquaintance of V. V. Stasoff. I remember V. V. Stasoff [1] reading aloud to us passages from the *Odyssey* one Saturday,—for the purpose of enlightening my own poor self. Musorgski once read Kookol'nik's *Prince Kholmski,* and the painter Myasoyedoff read Gogol's *Viy*. Balakireff, alone, or four-hands with Musorgski, would play Schumann's symphonies and Beethoven's quartets. Musorgski would sing something from *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* (for instance the scene between Farlaf and Nayina) with A. P. Arsenyeff who impersonated Nayina. As far as I recall, Balakireff was then composing a piano concerto, excerpts from which he would play for us. Often he explained to me instrumentation and forms of composition. From him I heard opinions that were entirely new to me. The tastes of the circle leaned towards Glinka, Schumann and Beethoven's last quartets. Eight symphonies of Beethoven found comparatively little favour with the circle. Except for the *A Midsummer Night's Dream* overture, the *Hebriden* overture and the finale of the Octet, they had little respect for Mendelssohn, and Musorgski often called him "Mendel"; Mozart and Haydn were considered out of date and naïve; J. S. Bach was held to be petrified, yes, even a mere musico-mathematical, feelingless and deadly nature, composing like a very machine. Handel was considered a strong nature, but he was mentioned very rarely. Chopin was likened by Balakireff to a nervous society lady. The beginning of his funeral march (B flat minor) roused them to rapture, but the rest was deemed utterly worthless. Some of his mazurkas found favour, but the greater part of his compositions were looked upon as pretty lace-work and no more. Berlioz, whose works they were just beginning to know, was highly esteemed. Liszt was comparatively unknown and was adjudged crippled and perverted from a musical point of view, and often even a caricature. Little was said of Wagner. The attitude toward the contemporary Russian composers was as follows: They respected Dargomyzhski for the recitative portions of *Rusalka;* his three orchestral fantasies were considered a mere curiosity (*The Stone Guest* did not exist as yet);

[1] Vladimir Vasiliyevich Stasoff, a famous writer on art and music (1824–1906). C. V. V.

his songs *The Paladin* and *Oriental Melody* were highly thought of; but, on the whole, he was not credited with any considerable talent and was treated with a shade of derision. L'voff [1] was deemed a nonentity. Rubinstein had a reputation as a pianist, but was thought to have neither talent nor taste as a composer. Syeroff had not put hand to his *Judith* at that time, and so was passed over in silence.

I listened to these opinions with avidity and absorbed the tastes of Balakireff, Cui and Musorgski without reasoning or examination. Many of the opinions were in reality without proof, for often other people's compositions under discussion were played before me only in fragments, and I had no idea of the whole work; occasionally they remained altogether unknown to me. Nevertheless I conned with admiration the opinions mentioned and repeated them in the circle of my own former schoolmates who were interested in music,—as if I were thoroughly convinced of their truth.

Balakireff grew very fond of me and used to say that I, as it were, had taken the place of Gusakovski, who had gone abroad and of whom they all had great expectations. If Balakireff loved me as a son and pupil, I, for my part, was literally, in love with him. In my eyes his talent surpassed all bounds of possibility and every word and opinion of his were absolute truth to me. My relations with Cui and Musorgski were doubtless not so warm, but, at any rate, the delight I took in them and my attachment to them were very considerable. On Balakireff's advice, I turned to composing the first movement of the E flat minor Symphony from the beginnings in my possession. The introduction and the exposition of the subjects (up to the development) were subjected to considerable criticism on the part of Balakireff; I kept zealously making changes. For the Christmas holidays I went to visit my parents in Tikhvin and there I finished writing the entire first movement; Balakireff approved of it and had almost no corrections to suggest. My first attempt to orchestrate this movement embarrassed me, and Balakireff orchestrated for me the first page of the Introduction, whereupon the work went better. According to the opinion of Balakireff and others, I proved to have a gift for instrumentation. During

[1] The composer of what was, before the revolution, the Russian national anthem, *God save the Tsar*. For L'voff's own account of how it came to be written see Montagu-Nathan's *History of Russian Music* (Scribner's), Page 57. C. V. V.

the winter and spring of 1862 I composed the Scherzo (without the trio) for my symphony and the Finale, which latter Balakireff and Cui praised particularly. As far as I recollect, this Finale was composed under the influence of Cui's Symphonic Allegro, at that time often played at Balakireff's; the subsidiary subject of this Cui subsequently utilized for MacGregor's narrative in his *William Ratcliff*. The principal subject of this Finale was composed by me on a train, when late in March I was returning from Tikhvin to St. Petersburg with my uncle Pyotr Petrovich.

My trip to Tikhvin was made necessary by my father's grave illness. I went there with my brother Voyin Andreyevich and arriving on March 18 found my father no longer among the living. My father died at seventy-eight. During the last years of his life he had several strokes and began to age perceptibly, though still retaining considerable vigour of memory and intellect. Until 1859–60, approximately, he enjoyed good health, walked a great deal and daily wrote in his diary. Having renounced the Masonic order to which he had belonged in the times of Alexander I, he remained exceedingly religious, daily reading the Gospel and various spiritual and moral books, from which he constantly copied numerous extracts. His piety was pure in the extreme, without the slightest taint of hypocrisy. He went to church (at the Greater Monastery) only on holidays, but prayed long at home every morning and evening. He was an exceedingly meek and upright man. Having inherited some wealth from my grandfather and subsequently, upon the death of his first wife (Princess Myeshcherskaya by birth), having received a fine estate near Moscow, he finally found himself propertyless thanks to his swindling friends who traded estates with him to their advantage, borrowed money from him, etc. His last post in the government service was that of civil governor of the Volhynian Government, where he was greatly beloved. He went into retirement in the late thirties, evidently because his kindly disposition was not in consonance with the demands made upon him by the higher authorities and the tendency to oppress the Poles. Upon retiring from service, he settled in Tikhvin with my mother and my uncle Pyotr Petrovich, drawing a small pension. Being opposed on principle to the system of serfdom, he was dismissing, within my memory, one by one, the domestics who still belonged to him; finally he set them all free. I recall our

former menials, numerous enough in the years of my childhood: my nurse, her husband—the ever drunken tailor Yakov, their son Vanya, the *dvornik* (house porter) Vasili, the other *dvornik* Konstantin, his wife, the cook Afimya, a Varvara, an Annushka, a Dunyasha and others. Having liberated them, we were left with hired servants from among those very former serfs of ours. While living in retreat at Tikhvin my father was highly regarded by Tikhvin society, often gave advice to many and settled disputes and misunderstandings. On great holidays there were no end of visitors at our house.

My father was buried at the Greater Monastery of Tikhvin. The following day my mother and brother went to St. Petersburg, and my uncle and I left the day after.

Since January 1862 Voyin Andreyevich had been director of the Marine Corps. After moving to St. Petersburg, mother and uncle Pyotr Petrovich went to live with him, and I came there to spend Sundays. Until then, since the death of P. N. Golovin, I had been spending my holidays at the house of Golovin's sister—Praskovya Nikolayevna Novikova, with whom I often played duets.

My graduation as a midshipman took place April 8, 1862. In those days the title of midshipman was granted upon completing the course of studies. The midshipmen had no set duties to perform; the officer's commission was conferred after two years of service as a midshipman. A midshipman was something midway between pupil and officer, and he was made an officer after a certain practical examination. Usually a midshipman was sent on a two years' practice cruise. A similar assignment awaited me, too. My cruise was to be made on the clipper *Almaz,* under the command of P. A. Zelyony. The clipper was detailed to a voyage abroad. I was face to face with a voyage of two or three years, a separation from Balakireff and other musical friends and a complete isolation from music. I had no desire to go abroad. Having become intimate with the Balakireff circle, I began to dream of a musical career; the circle had encouraged and directed me on that road. By that time I really did love music passionately.

Balakireff was deeply distressed by my impending departure and wanted to do some "wire-pulling," so as to have my sailing orders cancelled. But that was unthinkable. On the other hand, Cui insisted that I should not forego my first steps in the service, con-

sidering my youth. He said it was far more practical to go on the trip and get my commission, and that two or three years later I would have a clearer idea of what was to be done. Voyin Andreyevich was insistent upon my service and sailing. The beginnings of composition in my possession at that time did not seem to him sufficient for me to risk giving up a naval career at the very outset. My piano playing disclosed so little of the virtuoso, that even on that score I did not appear to him to be possessed of a bent for art such as promised even a moderately brilliant future. He was right, a thousand times right in looking upon me as a dilettante: I was one.

CHAPTER IV

1862

My career in my parents' eyes. My musical preceptors. Balakireff as a teacher of composition and leader of the circle. The other members of Balakireff's circle in the early Sixties and the teacher-leader's attitude toward them. Gusakovski, Cui, Musorgski, and I. The tendencies and spirit at the Marine School and in the Fleet in my time. Sailing abroad.

My parents, belonging to a family of old nobility, being people of the 1820–30 decade and rarely coming in touch with prominent literary and artistic people, naturally were far from the thought of making me a musician. My father was an emerited governor in retirement; my mother, who had grown up in the Government of Oryol in the family of wealthy landowners, the Skaryatins, had spent all her youth in the society of aristocrats and emerited men of that time. My uncle Nikolay Petrovich was a well-known admiral, director of the Marine Corps in the forties and a favourite of Emperor Nicholas I. As if to imitate him my brother was entered in the navy and really became a splendid seaman. Naturally, I, too, was intended for sea-service, the more so as, carried away by the letters sent by my brother from his voyage abroad and the reading of books of travel, I, too, did not avoid the path laid out for me. In out-of-the-way Tikhvin there was absolutely no real music, nor did anybody come there even to give concerts. But still, when my talent and inclination for music had perceptibly manifested themselves, my parents placed me under the best piano teachers then obtainable in Tikhvin. Indeed, Olga Nikitishna and Olga Fyeliksovna Fel, already mentioned by me, were the best pianists in our town; the best, because there were no others. Accordingly, my parents had done all they could do, at the time. But as my instructresses had not been able to develop any genuine talent for piano-playing in me (I did not play badly, but my playing was far from serious or impressive), it is the more evident that my

parents could not picture to themselves their son's future as that of a musician. Later, while at the naval school and studying with Ulikh, I could practise piano only on Saturdays and Sundays. Of course, even then my progress was inconsiderable. Not being a real pianist, Ulikh could not give me the proper position of the hands. And as for developing even an irregular technique he had neither sufficient time or desire, nor proper coercive or stimulating methods. Naturally, I could acquire a genuine love for music only after I reached St. Petersburg, where I first heard *genuine* music, *genuinely* performed, even if it was an *Indra* or *Lucia di Lammermoor* on the operatic stage. But I truly began to love the art of music when I came to know *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* as I have already said in the foregoing pages of my reminiscences.

The first real musician and virtuoso I met was Kanille. I am deeply grateful to him for guiding my taste and the original general development of my gifts of composition. But I shall always find fault with him for having paid scant attention to my piano technique and not giving me sufficient instruction in harmony and counterpoint. The work of harmonizing chorales which he had suggested to me was soon given up; for, while making but few corrections in my writings, he did not show me the elementary methods of harmonization, and, groping about my tasks and running into snags, as I did, I conceived only aversion for them. While studying with Kanille I did not know even the names of the principal chords, and yet I strained to compose nocturnes, variations and what not, which I carefully concealed from my brother and the Golovins and used to show only to Kanille. Though my love for music was growing, I was but a dilettante pupil, playing piano after a fashion and scribbling things on music paper, when I finally got to Balakireff. And now, after attempts amateurish in their technique, but musicianly and earnest as to style and taste, I was straightway put to the task of composing a symphony.

Balakireff who had never had any systematic course in harmony and counterpoint, and had not even superficially applied himself to it, evidently thought such studies quite unnecessary. Thanks to his original talent and pianistic gifts, thanks also to the musical environment which he had found at Ulybysheff's [1] (who

[1] A music critic, the author of a famous work on Mozart. Balakireff was brought up in Ulybysheff's household. C. V. V.

had a private orchestra which played Beethoven's symphonies under Balakireff's leadership)—he somehow became at a bound a genuine, practical musician. An excellent pianist, a superior sight reader of music, a splendid improviser, endowed by nature with the sense of correct harmony and part-writing, he possessed a technique, partly native and partly acquired through a vast musical erudition, with the help of an extraordinary memory, keen and retentive, which means so much in steering a critical course in musical literature. Then, too, he was a marvellous critic, especially a *technical critic.* He instantly felt every technical imperfection or error, he grasped a defect in form—at once. Whenever I, or other young men, later on, played him our essays at composition, he instantly caught all the defects of form, modulation, etc. and forthwith seating himself at the piano, he would improvise and show how the composition in question should be changed exactly as he indicated, and frequently entire passages in other people's compositions became his and not their putative authors' at all. He was obeyed absolutely, for the spell of his personality was tremendous. Young, with marvellously alert fiery eyes, with a handsome beard,—unhesitating, authoritative and straightforward in speech; ready at any moment for beautiful piano improvisation, remembering every music bar familiar to him, instantly learning by heart the compositions played for him, he was bound to exercise that spell as none else could. Though valuing the slightest proof of talent in another, he still could not help feeling his own superiority; nor could that other, too, help but feel it. His influence over those around him was boundless; and resembled some magnetic or mesmeric force. But with all his native mentality and brilliant abilities, there was one thing he failed to understand: that what was good for him in the matter of musical education was of no use whatever for others, as these others had not only grown up amid entirely different surroundings, but possessed utterly different natures; that the development of their talents was bound to take place at different intervals and in a different manner. Moreover, he despotically demanded that the tastes of his pupils should exactly coincide with his own. The slightest deviation from his taste was severely censured by him. By means of raillery, a parody or caricature played by him, whatever did not suit him at the moment was belittled—and the pupil

blushed with shame for his expressed opinion and recanted forever or for a long time to come.

I have already mentioned the general tendency of the taste of Balakireff and his friends who were manifestly under his boundless influence. I shall add to it that, under the influence of Schumann's compositions, melodic creative gifts were then looked upon with disfavour. The majority of melodies and themes were regarded as the weaker part of music: the exceptions quoted were few, e. g. the melody of Bayan's first song.[1] Nearly all the fundamental ideas of Beethoven's symphonies were thought weak; Chopin's melodies were considered sweet and womanish; Mendelssohn's—sour and bourgeois. However, the themes of Bach's fugues were undoubtedly held in respect. The greatest amount of attention and respect was showered on the musical elements called additions, introductions, brief but characteristic phrases, ostinato dissonant progressions (but not of the enharmonic variety), sequence-like progessions, organ-points, abrupt conclusions, etc. In the majority of cases a piece was critically judged in accordance with the separate elements: the first four bars were said to be excellent, the next eight weak, the melody immediately following good-for-nothing, the transition from it to the next phrase fine, etc. A composition was never considered as a whole in its æsthetic significance. Accordingly, the new compositions which Balakireff introduced to his circle were invariably played in fragments, in bars and even piece-meal: first the end, then the beginning, which usually produced a queer impression on an outsider who happened to come to the circle. A pupil like myself had to submit to Balakireff a proposed composition in its embryo, say, even the first four or eight bars. Balakireff would immediately make corrections, indicating how to recast such an embryo; he would criticize it, would praise and extol the first two bars but would censure the next two, ridicule them and try hard to make the author disgusted with them. Vivacity of composition and fertility were not at all in favour, frequent recasting was demanded, and the composition was extended over a long space of time under the cold control of self-criticism. Having taken two

[1] Bayan was a famous minstrel. Rimsky-Korsakoff here refers to a tenor air in Glinka's opera, *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* sung by a character named after the celebrated old bard. C. V. V.

M. A. BALAKIREFF *from the drawing by* LÉON BAKST

or three chords and having invented a short phrase, the author endeavoured to account to himself whether he had acted properly and whether there was nothing shameful in these beginnings! At first glance such an attitude towards art seems incompatible with Balakireff's brilliant gift of improvisation. And really there is a puzzling contradiction here. Balakireff, at any moment ready to play a fantasy on any theme of his own or somebody else's with greatest gusto; Balakireff, instantly detecting the flaws in the works of others and ready to show concretely how this or that was to be corrected, how to continue a certain approach or how to avoid a commonplace turn of phrase, how to improve the harmonization of a phrase, the arrangement of a chord, etc;—Balakireff, whose talent as a composer shone dazzlingly for all who came into contact with him, this very Balakireff composed with exceeding slowness and deliberation. At that time (he was 24–25 years of age) he had written several magnificent songs, a Spanish Overture and a Russian one, and the music to *King Lear*. Not much, but still his most productive period. His fertility decreased with the years. Of this, however, I will speak later.

Obviously, at the time I could not make the observations which resulted in the above lines. What has been said in these lines grew clear to me only subsequently. And, moreover, in those days, Balakireff's self-criticism and manner of treating his pupils and companions in art had not as yet assumed that clear, tangible form which could be observed beginning with 1865, when other musical fledgelings appeared on the scene beside myself. Thus in characterizing Balakireff I have run ahead, but my characterization is nevertheless far from being complete and I shall endeavour to supplement it in the course of my reminiscences, returning again and again to this enigmatic, contradictory and fascinating personality.

On joining Balakireff's circle I proved to have taken, as it were, the place of the absent Gusakovski. Gusakovski was a young man, just graduated from the University as a chemist, who had gone abroad for a long stay. He possessed a vigorous talent for composition, was Balakireff's favourite, but, according to Balakireff's and Cui's accounts, a queer, extravagant and sickly character. His compositions—piano pieces—were mostly unfinished: a number of scherzos without the trios, a sonata allegro, frag-

ments of music for *Faust* and a completed symphonic allegro in E flat major, with Balakireff's instrumentation,—all beautiful music in the Beethoven-Schumann style. Balakireff guided him in composition, but nothing finished would come. Gusakovski jumped from one composition to another, and the gifted sketches sometimes remained even unrecorded, save for those retained in Balakireff's memory.

Balakireff had no difficulty in getting along with me. At his suggestion I most readily rewrote the symphonic movements composed by me and brought them to completion with the help of his advice and improvisations. Balakireff considered me a symphony specialist. On the other hand, crediting Cui, as he did, with a bent for opera he allowed a certain degree of liberty to Cui's creative genius, treating with indulgence many an element that did not meet his own tastes. The Auber vein in Cui's music was justified by his half-French origin and was kindly winked at. Cui displayed no promise of becoming a good orchestrator, and Balakireff willingly orchestrated for him some of his works, e. g. the overture of *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*. At that time this opera had been finished, and *The Mandarin's Son* (a one-act opera, to Kryloff's text) was being written or possibly had already been finished. Cui's symphonic Allegro in E flat major was apparently written under Balakireff's strict supervision, but was left unfinished after all, for not everybody could submissively endure and zealously carry out his demands as I did. Cui's instrumental compositions finished by that time were a scherzo for the orchestra in F-major (Bamberg),[1] and two other scherzos in C-major and G sharp minor for the piano. Apparently Musorgski's symphonic attempts also came to nothing under the pressure of Balakireff's suggestions and demands. At that period, the only work of Musorgski's recognized by the circle was the chorus from *Œdipus*. Cui's scherzo, the dances from *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, Balakireff's overture to *King Lear*, Musorgski's above-mentioned chorus and Gusakovski's Allegro (with Balakireff's instrumentation) were performed partly at the concerts of the Russian Musical Society under Rubinstein's direction, partly at a theatre concert under K. N. Lyadoff's direction, prior to my acquaintance

[1] This, too, possibly, with Balakireff's instrumentation.

with Balakireff's circle, but for some reason I did not happen to hear them.

Accordingly, during the winter of 1861–62, Balakireff's circle consisted of Cui, Musorgski, and myself. There is no doubt that, for both Cui and Musorgski, Balakireff was indispensable as adviser and censor, as editor and teacher. Without him they would have been unable to take a step. Who else could have given advice and shown them how to correct their compositions as regards form? Who could have put their part-writing in order? Who could have been able to give advice as to orchestration and, in case of need, do the orchestration for them? Who would have been able to correct their slips of the pen, i. e. to read the proof of their compositions, so to speak?

Cui, who had had a few lessons from Moniuszko,[1] was far from being able to manage clear and natural part-writing, and for orchestration he had neither inclination nor ability. Musorgski, who was an excellent pianist, had not the slightest technical training as a composer. Neither of them was a musician by profession. Cui was an engineering officer, and Musorgski a retired officer of the Preobrazhenski Regiment of the Imperial Guards. Balakireff alone was a real musican. Since his youth he had grown accustomed to seeing himself in the midst of Ulybysheff's orchestra; being a good pianist, he had already appeared in public, at University concerts, at soirées in the homes of L'voff, Odoyevski, Vyelgorski, etc. He had played every variety of chamber-music with the greatest artists of the time; had accompanied Vieuxtemps and many women singers. M. I. Glinka himself had blessed him for his activity as composer, giving him the theme of a Spanish march for his overture. He needed Cui and Musorgski as friends, adherents, followers and comrade-pupils; but he could have gone on without them. Musical experience and life gave Balakireff's brilliant talent an opportunity for rapid development. The development of the others began later, went more slowly and required a guide. This guide was Balakireff, who had acquired everything by his astounding many-sided talent and experience quite without labour and without system, and therefore had no idea of any systems. I might say even more: having himself gone through no prepara-

[1] The Polish composer (1820–72), whose principal work was the opera, *Halka*. C. V. V.

tory school Balakireff thought it unnecessary for others as well. There was no need of training: one must begin to compose outright, to create and learn through one's own work of creation. Whatever would be unfinished or unskilful in this early creative work of his comrade-pupils, he himself would finish; he would set everything to rights, complete in case of need, and the composition would be ready to be issued, for performance or publication. And it was necessary to hurry with publication—the talents were indubitable. And yet Cui was already 25–26, Musorgski 21–22. Too late to go to school, high time to live and work and make themselves known. There is no doubt that this guidance and guardianship over composers who failed to stand on their own legs, placed a certain general stamp on them, the stamp of Balakireff's taste and methods,—much more pronouncedly than does the simple and indifferent guidance of some professor of counterpoint. In the latter case there come into play the common methods of counterpoint and harmony, the general deductions from current musical forms; in the former case, certain melodic turns were used, certain methods of modulation, certain instrumental colouring, etc., which had originated in the tendencies of Balakireff's taste, in his own technique, by no means faultless or varied, and in his own one-sided erudition in the field of orchestration, as became clear to me subsequently. Nevertheless, at the time, Balakireff's technique and his learning which he had gained through practice, thanks to his own talent, taste, and innate powers of observation, infinitely surpassed the technique and knowledge of Gusakovski, Cui and Musorgski. He, at all events, was a musician by nature and profession, while they were gifted amateurs.

Was Balakireff's attitude toward his pupil-friends right? In my opinion, absolutely wrong. A truly talented pupil needs so little. It is so easy to show all that is necessary in harmony and counterpoint, in order to put him on his own feet in this respect, it is easy to direct him in understanding the forms of composition, if only the thing is properly taken hold of. A year or two of systematic study in the development of technique, a few exercises in free composition and orchestration and the teaching is over, provided he has a good piano technique. The pupil is no longer a pupil, a schoolboy, but a budding composer striking out for himself. But that was not the case with all of us.

Balakireff did what he could to the best of his knowledge and ability. And if he did not understand how to manage, the cause lay in those years of darkness for the music of Russia and in his half-Russian, half-Tartar nature, nervous, impatient, easily excited and quickly tiring, in his native talent, brilliant and aboriginal, which met nowhere any obstacle in the way of its development, and his purely Russian self-delusion and laziness. Besides the mentioned peculiarities of his nature, Balakireff was a man capable of growing warmly and deeply attached to people who struck a sympathetic chord in him, and, on the other hand, he was ready, at first sight, to conceive an eternal hatred or contempt for people who had not won his good-will. All these complex elements had made of him a mass of contradictions, enigmatic and fascinating, but afterwards brought him to many a pass entirely unforeseen and improbable at the time.

Of all his pupil-friends I was the youngest, being only seventeen years old. What did I need? A piano technique, the technique of harmony and counterpoint and an idea of musical forms. Balakireff should have made me sit down at the piano and learn to play well. That was so easy for him—as I worshipped him and obeyed his advice in everything. But he did not do it: declaring from the outset that I was no pianist, he gave up the whole thing as altogether unnecessary. He should have given me a few lessons in harmony and counterpoint, should have made me write a few fugues and explained the grammar of musical forms to me. He could not do it, as he had not studied it systematically himself, and considered it unnecessary, hence also he did not tell me to study under some one else. Having made me write a symphony after our first meeting, he cut me off from preparatory work and the acquisition of a technique. And I, who did not know the names of all intervals and chords, to whom harmony meant but the far-famed prohibition of parallel octaves and fifths, who had no idea as to what double counterpoint was, nor the meaning of cadence, thesis and antithesis, and period, I set out to compose a symphony. Schumann's *Manfred* overture and Third Symphony, Glinka's *Prince Kholmski* and *Jota Aragonesa* and Balakireff's *King Lear*—these were the models I followed in writing the symphony; copied, thanks to my powers of observation and imitation. As for orchestration, the perusal of Berlioz's *Traité d' Instrumentation* and

of some Glinka scores, gave me a little fragmentary information. I had no idea of trumpets and French horns and would get confused between writing for natural-scale and chromatic-scale instruments. But Balakireff himself had not known these instruments and became acquainted with them only through Berlioz. The bow instruments, too, were an absolute muddle to me: the movements of the bow, the strokes, were completely unknown to me—I indicated interminable legatos, impossible of execution. I had a very vague notion of the execution of double notes and chords, blindly following Berlioz's table, in case of emergency. But Balakireff himself did not know this chapter, having the most confused notion of violin playing and positions. I felt that I was ignorant of many things, but was convinced that Balakireff knew everything in the world, and he cleverly concealed from me and the others the insufficiency of his information. But in orchestral colouring and combination of instruments he was a good practical hand, and his counsels were invaluable to me.

In one way or another, towards May, 1862, the first movement, the Scherzo and Finale of the symphony had been composed and somehow orchestrated by me. The Finale in particular won general approval at the time. My attempts to write an Adagio met with no success, and it was useless to hope for any: in those days one was somehow ashamed to write a cantabile melody; the fear of dropping into the commonplace precluded any kind of sincerity.

In the spring I visited Balakireff every Saturday and looked forward to those evenings as to a holiday. I also used to go to Cui's. He was living at the Voskresyenski Prospect and kept a boarding-house to prepare boys for entrance to military schools. Cui had two grand pianos, and whenever I came, there was always some eight-hand playing. The players were—Balakireff, Musorgski's brother, Filaret Petrovich, who went for some reason under the name of Yevgyeni Petrovich, Cui and occasionally, Dmitri Vasilyevich Stasoff. V. V. Stasoff was usually present also. They played Berlioz's *Queen Mab* scherzo and *Ball at the Capulets',* in M. P. Musorgski's transcription for eight-hands, as well as the procession from Balakireff's *King Lear,* in his own arrangement. They played four-hands the overtures to *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *The Mandarin's Son* and played also the movements of my symphony as they were completed. Musorgski used to sing

with Cui excerpts from the latter's operas. Musorgski had a fair baritone voice and sang magnificently; Cui sang in a composer's voice. Cui's wife, Malvina Rafayilovna, then singing no longer, had been an amateur singer prior to my acquaintance with them.

In May, Balakireff went to the Caucasus for the mineral water cure; Musorgski went to the country, and Cui to his summer-home. My brother left on a practice cruise; his family, my mother and my uncle left for the island Sonion-Sari, near Vyborg, in Finland, to spend the summer. Everybody had gone. I was ordered to make a sailing trip abroad on the clipper *Almaz* and was to spend the summer at Cronstadt with a ship then being fitted out. At Cronstadt I stayed at the house of K. E. Zambrzhitski, a close acquaintance of my brother's. I don't quite remember how I spent that summer. I remember only that I did very little with my music and composed nothing; but why—I don't know. I was killing time in the company of my fellow-graduates. Once Kanille paid me a visit and stayed with me for two days. I received several letters from Balakireff. I went on a few days' leave to see my folks on Sonion-Sari Island. Thus the entire summer went by—tedious and devoid of interest. My circle of schoolmates could not be called intellectual. In general, I cannot boast of the spiritual tendencies of the students of the Naval School during my whole six-year stay there. Theirs was completely the cadet spirit inherited from the days of Nicholas I and not yet affected by the new times. Horseplay that was not always decent, rough protests against the authorities, rude intercourse with fellow-students, prosy obscenity in conversation, a cynical attitude toward the fair sex, a disinclination for reading, contempt for the foreign languages and subjects outside our special studies, and in the summer, during practice cruises, even drunkenness—these were characteristic of the school spirit of those days. How little this environment accorded with artistic aspirations and how deadly it proved to even the slenderest of artistic natures, seldom as these appeared there! They vegetated there, quite fouled by the military humdrum of the school. And in this atmosphere I, too, vegetated, languid and emaciated, as regards general artistic, poetic and intellectual development. Of literary artists I had read all of Pushkin, Lyermontoff and Gogol while at school, but had not gone beyond that. Though I was promoted from class to class, my writing was full

of disgraceful grammatical mistakes; I knew nothing of history, and just as little of physics and chemistry. Only in mathematics and its application to navigation I got along passably. In the summer, on practice cruises, my studies in naval art: rowing, sailing, rigging—went rather slowly. I was fond of the course in making sail and was rather fearless in climbing masts and yards. I liked sea-bathing and, with Skrydloff and other classmates, used to swim five ship-lengths around the vessel without pause or rest. I never was seasick and never was afraid of the sea and its perils. But, at bottom, I did not like sea-service and had no aptitude for it. I possessed no presence of mind and had no executive ability at all. Subsequently, during the sail abroad, I proved to be utterly unable to give orders in military style, to scold, to swear at people, to speak reprovingly, to punish, to speak to a subordinate in the tone of a superior, etc. All these gifts, indispensable in navy and military service, I utterly lacked. Those were the years of rope-ends and brutal blows on the mouth. On several occasions, willy-nilly, I had to witness the punishment of sailors with 200–300 rat-line blows on the bare back, in the presence of the whole crew, and to listen to the chastised man exclaiming in an imploring voice: "Your Honour, have mercy!" On the artillery ship *Prokhor*, when the drunken crew were brought in from shore-leave on Sunday, Lieutenant Dek, standing at the companionway, used to greet each drunken sailor with fist blows on the mouth. Which of the two—the drunken sailor or the lieutenant who hit him on the mouth for the love of it—had more of the beast in him, is not hard to decide, in the lieutenant's favour. Commanders and officers, supervising the tasks, swore with the technique of virtuosi: the choicest billingsgate filled the air with a heavy stench. Some of the officers had a reputation for their fiery imagination and inventive genius in abusive language, others—for their efficiency in knocking out teeth. For this latter exploit great was the fame of first class Captain Boobnoff, who, they said, used to stage a veritable Mamay Massacre [1] aboard his ship while tacking under sail.

I have said already that, on entering the school, I had gained a good footing by giving at once a setback to the classmates who annoyed me. But in my second or third school year my temper

[1] The famous débâcle of the Tartars under Mamay, on the Kulikovo Field (1380). J. A. J.

somehow became flabby and timid to excess. Once I did not even pay in kind my classmate M. who hit me in the face without rhyme or reason, and out of sheer malice. However, I was pretty generally liked; I kept out of quarrels and followed our school code in every detail. I was never afraid of the authorities, but my conduct was generally correct. During my last school year, after my brother had been appointed director, I did better in my studies and ranked sixth among our sixty-odd graduates.

On making Balakireff's acquaintance, I heard from him, for the first time in my life, that one must read, must look after one's own education, must become acquainted with history, polite literature and criticism. Many thanks to him for it! Balakireff, who had only graduated from a *Gymnasium* and had but a short term at the University of Kazañ, had done a great deal of reading in Russian literature and history, and seemed to me highly educated. At that time, we had no talks about religion; but it seems, he was a perfect sceptic even then. As for me, I was nothing at that time, neither believer, nor sceptic; religious questions simply did not interest me. Though brought up in a profoundly religious family, I had been rather indifferent to prayer since childhood, I don't know why. I prayed daily, in the morning, on retiring, and at church, but did so, only because my parents demanded it. A strange thing! When a boy, standing at prayer, I occasionally ventured to utter blasphemies, as if to test whether the Lord God would punish me for it. He did not punish me, of course, and doubt crept into my soul; sometimes I would be seized with repentance and self-reproaches for my stupid behaviour; but, as far as I recall, these were neither deep nor strong. I suppose such pranks must be classed in psychiatry among the co-called *fixed ideas*. While at school I went to church on Sundays and was bored to death. But at Tikhvin, I always had liked the archimandrite's divine service and the church singing for their beauty and solemnity. Annually during Lent, I went to communion as is usual. There was one year in which I treated this ceremonial with reverence, for no obvious reason; but in the years following I was rather careless. During the last two years of my stay at school, I heard from my schoolmates S. and K.-K., that "there is no God and it's all just invention." K.-K. affirmed that he had read Voltaire's (?!) philosophy. I took rather readily to the view that "there is no God and

it's all just invention." However, this thought troubled me little, and in reality I gave no thought to these weighty matters. But my piety, weak even before then, had completely evaporated, and I felt no spiritual hunger. I now recall that when a boy of but 12 or so, I was not averse to free-thinking, and once pestered my mother with questions about the freedom of the will. I told her that even though everything in the world is done according to God's will, and all phenomena of life depend on Him, man must still be free in the choice of his own acts, and, consequently, God's will must be powerless in this regard; otherwise how can He permit evil acts on the part of man, and then inflict punishment for them? Naturally I had not put it exactly that way, but this was the thought; and my mother was at a loss how to make answer to it.

I have already spoken of the comparative coarseness and low level of intellectual life among my schoolmates. Such was the case at least during my first four years at school. In the two highest classes a certain improvement could be felt, however. I have already mentioned the propensity toward music and choral singing among certain of my schoolmates in the upper classes; I have also mentioned the circle which had formed around me owing to my playing the harmonium and rehearsing choral works with them. Since I had begun seriously to study with Kanille and Balakireff, I held animated talks on music with my classmates I. A. Bronyetski and Prince A. D. Myshetski. With Prince Myshetski I grew very intimate and friendly. Mention must also be made of my short-lived youthful attachment for the pretty Miss L. P. D., in the summer of 1859, whose acquaintance I had made at Revel while stationed in the local roadstead. To be sure, she was my senior by 7 or 8 years and considered me a mere boy, but my attentions obviously amused her. I was also a visitor at Miss D.'s home in St. Petersburg during the autumn; but my liking for her was soon over; I ceased meeting her, and my life ran along again in the usual, prosaic school groove. Like the majority of young men in their teens, I was somewhat shy in society and avoided ladies.

In reviewing my spiritual and intellectual life during these years at school, I digressed from the consecutive narrative. I turn again to the interrupted story. I have already said that I spent the summer of 1862 in Cronstadt, a tedious and spiritless summer. Of these three or four summer months I have preserved no vivid

recollections whatever. In September the clipper *Almaz* came into the roadstead ready to sail abroad. My brother's family, my mother and my uncle returned to St. Petersburg. Balakireff, Cui and the others also came back. In vain Balakireff offered to solicit a rescission of the order for my trip abroad. I had to set out at my brother's insistence, and thus, at the end of October we started on the cruise. I saw Balakireff, Cui, and Kanille for the last time at the steamer-landing in St. Petersburg where they came to see me off, when I was bidding a final farewell to the capital. Some two days later, on October 21st, we weighed anchor and bade farewell to Russia and Cronstadt.[1]

[1] Written in February 1893.

CHAPTER V

1862–65

The cruise abroad. Sailing to England and the Libau coast. Rear-Admiral Lyesovski. The voyage to America. Our stay in the United States. Ordered to the Pacific. Captain Zelyony. From New York to Rio de Janeiro and back to Europe.

We started for Kiel, where we stayed some three days, and thence for England, to Gravesend. On putting to sea, the clipper's masts proved too short and, therefore, it was proposed to order new masts and refit in England; this was done soon after our arrival. The work kept us in England (Gravesend and Greenhithe) nearly four months. My classmates and I visited London two or three times, to see the sights; Westminster Abbey, the Tower, the Crystal Palace, etc. I also went to the opera, at Covent Garden Theatre, but do not remember the bill.

On board the clipper there were four of us midshipmen, fellow-graduates, together with several engineer's mates and mechanical engineers. All of us were quartered in one small cabin and were not admitted to the officers' wardroom. We midshipmen were not given any responsible duties. We stood watch in turn, assisting the officer of the watch. Nevertheless we had plenty of free time. The clipper possessed a fair library, and we read quite a bit. Every now and then we had lively discussions and debates. The new ideas of the sixties brushed us, too. There were progressives and conservatives in our midst. Among the former, P. A. Mordovin was most prominent; among the latter, A. E. Bakhtyaroff. We read Buckle, whose works were in great vogue in the sixties, Macaulay, John Stuart Mill, Byelinski, Dobrolyuboff,[1] etc. We read fiction, too. In England, Mordovin kept buying piles of English and French books, among them all sorts of histories of revolutions and civilizations. There was enough to argue about.

[1] Two of the most famous Russian critics. J. A. J.

That was the time of Herzen[1] and Ogaryoff with their *Kolokol* (The Bell). We even used to get the *Kolokol*. In the meanwhile the Polish uprising began. Now there were frequent quarrels between Mordovin and Bakhtyaroff over the former's sympathy for the Poles. All my sympathies lay with Mordovin; Bakhtyaroff, who admired Katkoff, was unsympathetic; and his convictions were not after my own heart: he was a violent partisan of serfdom, as well as a nobleman with the haughtiness of his class.

Beside corresponding with my mother and my brother, I kept up a correspondence with Balakireff: he urged me to write, if possible, the Andante of my Symphony. I buckled down to work, taking as a basis the Russian theme *Pro Tatarski Polon* (On the Tartar Captivity), given me by Balakireff, and made known to the latter by Yakushkin.[2] I succeeded in composing the Andante while we lay at anchor in England and sent the score to Balakireff by mail. I wrote it without a piano (we had none); perhaps once or twice I managed to play the entire composition at a restaurant on shore. Upon receiving the Andante, Balakireff wrote me that his whole circle had been taken with this composition and considered it the best movement of the symphony. Still, he suggested by letter certain changes which I made.

In London we bought a small harmoniflute.[3] On it I often played whatever came along, for my own and my comrades' amusement.

Late in February, 1863, when our refitting had been completed, new and unexpected orders were forwarded to the clipper *Almaz*. The Polish uprising had burst into flame; rumours were rife that arms were being smuggled for the Poles from abroad to the coast of Libau. Our clipper was to return to the Baltic Sea to cruise within sight of the Libau shore and to see that no arms were brought into Poland. In spite of the secret sympathy, within the young hearts of some of us (the members of the midshipmen's cabin), for a cause that seemed righteous to us, the cause of a distant and kindred nationality oppressed by her sister Russia, we were forced to set forth willy-nilly, at the authorities' order, to serve the oppressor faithfully. We bade farewell to foggy Eng-

[1] Alyeksandr Herzen. J. A. J.
[2] The great Russian folklore collector, J. A. J.
[3] See note on Page 16.

land, and our clipper left for Libau. I recall that in passing through the North Sea we were caught in a stiff gale. The rolling of the sea was awful; for two days no hot food could be cooked. But I was not sea-sick at all.

We hugged the Libau coast for nearly four months, occasionally entering Libau or Polangen for coal and provisions. Perhaps our cruise was useful in that it frightened those who had intended to ship arms and munitions to the rebellious Poles; but we never saw a single suspicious sail anywhere in our vicinity. Once the smoke of a steamer appeared in the distance; we made a dash for it, but the steamer soon vanished; we could not positively say whether it had been an enemy vessel or just a chance bottom. The cruise off Libau was tiresome. Foul weather and strong winds followed us almost constantly. Libau offered nothing of interest; Polangen even less. At rare intervals, in Polangen or ashore, we rode horseback for amusement. I remember that during those times I grew used to going without music, and that reading absorbed me completely.

In June or July our clipper was ordered back to Cronstadt. The purpose of our return was unknown to us. When we arrived in Cronstadt and had lain in the roadstead three or four days, we were ordered out again to sail in Admiral Lyesovski's squadron. We had the following ships with us: the frigate *Alyeksandr Nyevski,* the corvettes *Vityaz* and *Varyag* and the clipper *Zhemchoog.* The admiral was on the *Alyeksandr Nyevski.* While stationed in Cronstadt I managed to run down to St. Petersburg and Pavlovsk, where the Golovins and the Novikoffs had summer homes. My mother, my brother's family, as well as Balakireff, Cui and the other friends, were not in St. Petersburg then, because of the summer season. Johann Straus (1823–99) was then conducting in Pavlovsk and I managed to hear Glinka's *A Night in Madrid.* I remember it gave me the greatest pleasure.

On putting to sea, our fleet separated, and each vessel went on her own. When we were on the high seas we learned we were bound for New York to join the other ships of the squadron, that the object of our expedition was purely military. War with England was expected over the Polish uprising and, in the event of war, our squadron was to threaten English ships in the Atlantic. We were to reach America unobserved by the English; hence our

course lay to the north; for we avoided the usual route from England to New York, by making this detour, steering a course where not a single ship could be met. On our way we put in at Kiel two days, to coal, keeping the object of our cruise a close secret. From Kiel we were to proceed to New York without a stop. The greater part of this voyage was to be made under sail, for we would not have had coal enough for so long a cruise. By doubling the North of England, we no longer met any ships whatever. On entering the Atlantic, our clipper encountered stubborn head winds which often attained the force of gales. Though under full sail, we often literally made no headway for days at a time, owing to the strong contrary winds. The weather was quite cold and damp. Frequently no cooking was done, since the clipper rolled horribly under the huge waves. While crossing the route of hurricanes, which, at this season of the year, issue from the Antillean waters along the coast of North America and turn across the ocean toward the English coast, we noticed one fine day that we were entering the area of one of these hurricanes. A sharp fall in the barometer and a closeness in the air announced its approach. The wind grew stronger and stronger and constantly changed its direction from left to right. Enormous waves were raised. We kept under one small sail. Night came and the lightning flashed. The rolling of the sea was terrific. Toward morning, the rise in the barometer denoted the passing of the hurricane. We had cut across its right wing not far from centre. All was well; though violent storms continued to give us trouble.

Near the American coast we crossed the warm current—the Gulf Stream. I remember how surprised and delighted we were, when we went on deck in the morning,—to see the colour of the ocean utterly changed: from green-grey it had turned to a wonderful blue. Instead of chilly cutting air, we had 72.5° F., the sun and delightful weather. Exactly as if we had reached the tropics. Every moment flying-fish leaped from the water. At night, the ocean glistened with magnificent phosphorescence. The same on the following day: a thermometer was dipped into the water—72.5°F. On the morning of the third day after we had entered the Gulf Stream—a change once more: grey skies, chilly air, the colour of the ocean—grey-green, the temperature of the water

39°–41°F., the flying fish gone. Our clipper had entered a new cold current, running parellel to the Gulf Stream. We bent our course to the southwest toward New York and soon began to sight merchantmen. In October (I don't recall the date) the American coast grew visible. We took on a pilot, and soon entered the Hudson and dropped anchor in New York, where we found the other ships of our squadron.

We remained in the United States from October, 1863, until April, 1864. Besides New York, we visited Annapolis and Baltimore. From Chesapeake Bay we went sight-seeing in Washington. During our stay at Annapolis, it was bitterly cold, temperature down to 2° below zero; the river where our clipper and the corvette *Varyag* lay, froze over. The ice was so firm that we attempted to walk on it. But the cold snap lasted only two or three days and then the river opened.

We (midshipmen and officers) got a chance to run down to Niagara from New York. The trip was made on the Hudson River by boat to Albany and from there by train. The banks of the Hudson proved very beautiful and Niagara Falls made the most marvellous impression on us. I think it was November. The leaves on the trees were many-coloured, the weather was fine. We climbed over all the rocks, went under the arch of the waterfall as far as we could on the Canadian side; we rowed in a boat as near as possible up to the falls. The impression made by the falls, viewed from various points, especially from the Terrapin Tower, is incomparable. This tower is built on rocks at the brink of the falls; it is reached over a light bridge thrown from Goat Island, which divides the Falls in two: the American and the Canadian (Horseshoe Falls). The roar of the falls is indescribable and is audible for miles around. The Americans took us to Niagara Falls at their own expense, with fine hospitality to their trans-Atlantic friends. We were shown to rooms in a magnificent hotel. All the officers and midshipmen of our squadron, divided into two parties, took part in the trip. Admiral Lyesovski was in our party. At the Niagara Hotel I was asked to play for the entertainment of the company. Of course, I objected, went to my room and put my boots at the door, pretending I was asleep, but, at Lyesovski's order delivered to me by some one through the door, I was obliged to dress and come to the salon. I sat down at the

piano and played, I think, the Krakovyak and something else from *A Life for the Tsar*. Soon I noticed that nobody was listening to me; they were all busy talking to my accompaniment. Under cover of the conversation, I ceased playing and went to bed. The next evening, they did not disturb me again; nobody cared for my playing; it had been called for to satisfy the mere whim of Lyesovski who understood absolutely nothing of music and did not like it at all. By the way about Lyesovski. He was a well-known seaman, formerly commander of the frigate *Diana* which had gone down near Japan during an earthquake. Lyesovski was notorious for his irascible and ungovernable temper and once, in a fit of wrath, had rushed up to a sailor, guilty of some offence, and bitten off his nose,—for which he subsequently obtained a pension for him, according to report.

After two days at Niagara Falls, we returned to New York by another route, through Elmira, when we passed within sight of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Our clipper again replaced spars in New York, the very spars which had just been made for it in England. Of the seven months spent by us in America, we stayed the first three or four months in New York, then made a trip to Chesapeake Bay, Annapolis and Baltimore, as I have already mentioned. The last two months we spent again in New York. The expected war with England had not materialized, and we did not have to privateer and threaten English merchantmen in the Atlantic. While we were in Chesapeake Bay, the frigate *Alyeksandr Nyevski* and the corvette *Vityaz* went down to Havana. Toward the end of our stay in North America the whole squadron assembled in New York. During the whole of our stay in the United States, the Americans were engaged in their Civil War. The Northern and the Southern states fought over the question of slave-holding. We followed the course of events with deep interest, though we kept exclusively within the northern territory, which fought under President Lincoln for the emancipation of the Negroes.

How did we pass the time while in America? We supervised our work, stood watch, read a great deal, and made rather stupid trips ashore one after another. On shore leave, arriving at a new place, we usually went to see what was worth while. We visited restaurants and lounged about, eating and occasionally drinking. There were no great revels among us, but an extra quantity of wine

came somehow to be consumed rather often. On such occasions I did not lag behind the others, although I was never among the leaders in this respect. Once, I remember, our whole midshipmen's ward-room sat down to write letters. Somebody ordered a bottle of wine; it was immediately emptied "for inspiration"; then followed another, and a third; the letters were forgotten and soon the whole company went ashore, where the carousal continued. Occasionally such drinking-bouts wound up by visits to street women—how base and dirty!

In New York I heard rather poor performances of Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* and Gounod's *Faust.* I had entirely given up music, save for playing the harmoniflute, every now and then, to entertain the midshipmen's ward-room or duets on this instrument with the violin played by the American pilot, Mr. Thompson. He and I played various national American anthems and songs; to his great amazement, I immediately played, by ear, the accompaniments to tunes I had heard for the first time.

By April, 1864 it became known that there would be no war with England, and that our squadron would be sent on another mission. Indeed, our clipper soon received orders to sail to the Pacific around Cape Horn, so that a voyage around the world awaited us, i. e. two or three more years of navigation. The corvette *Varyag* had received similiar orders; the other ships were to return to Europe. For some reason, Captain Zelyony was most reluctant to go around the world. But I received the news with joy rather than otherwise. By that time I had grown almost unaccustomed to music. Letters from Balakireff came rarely, since I, too, wrote him but rarely. Thoughts of becoming a musican and composer gradually left me altogether: distant lands began to allure me, somehow, although, properly speaking, naval service never pleased me much, and hardly suited my character at all.

In April, our clipper left New York to proceed to Cape Horn. Ships sailing at this season of the year from the United States to Cape Horn, usually turn East to Europe, taking advantage of the prevailing western winds, then, a short distance from the Azores, they go south and, catching the favourable northeast trades, cross the equator as far as possible from the American coast, that the southeast trades of the Southern Hemisphere may by their direction prove the more advantageous for reaching Rio de Janeiro or

Montevideo, where ships usually call before rounding Cape Horn. We, too, did this. Our voyage from New York to Rio was made under sail in sixty-five days. The length of the voyage was due, in the first place, to the fact that the clipper *Almaz* proved insufficiently fast in spite of our twice re-fitting its masts; secondly, because Captain Zelyony was a somewhat timid seaman and distrustful man. He had no faith at all in his officers of the watch and his first lieutenant, L. V. Mikhayloff. He obliged them to carry small sails, which were taken in at the slightest blow of wind. While merchantmen we met were under full sail, we never ventured to imitate them, but crept slowly along. During the voyage Zelyony spent all day on deck in personal command of the vessel and dozed at night, in his clothes, sitting on the steps of his cabin ready to rush at the first noise and take over the command. Owing to such distrust, the officers of the watch lost their independence and referred every trifle to the commander who used to berate them at their slightest failure and humiliate them before the crew. He was disliked by both officers and midshipmen, for his habits of rudeness and distrust; he was disliked also because they felt it was impossible to gain experience under his direction. On Sundays, having first assembled the whole crew before the ikon, Zelyony usually recited prayers himself, and then, on the upper deck, read the navy laws and regulations which proclaimed his unlimited power over the crew. He disliked flogging the crew and for this one must give him credit; but he was too free with his hands, and was given to coarse and indecent language.

But let me leave those impressions of the voyage which concern only naval service, naval art and people,—impressions of which enough has already been said, and let me turn to my impressions of the cruise as a voyage in the narrower sense of the word. Those were impressions of an entirely different kind.

At first our cruise was of the same rough nature as our passage from Russia to New York had been. Fresh and stormy winds accompanied us on our way to the coast of Europe, although this time the Atlantic was less treacherous owing to the coming of the spring season. Soon after our southerly turn (not far from the Azores) the weather began to improve, the sky to grow more and more azure, ever more warmth was wafted through the air; finally we entered the zone of the northeastern trade winds and soon

crossed the Tropic of Cancer. Wonderful weather, an even warm wind, a gently agitated sea, a dark-azure sky with white dappled clouds, did not change during our entire passage through the blessed zone of the trades. Wonderful days and wonderful nights! The marvellous dark-azure colour of the sky by day would be replaced by a fantastic phosphorescent light at night. As we went further south the twilight grew shorter and shorter, while the southern sky with the new constellations was disclosed more and more. What radiance of the Milky Way, with the constellation of the Southern Cross, what a wonderful star Canopus (in the constellation Argo), the stars of the Centaur, the brightly blazing red Antares (in the Scorpion), visible in Russia as a pale star on bright summer nights! Sirius, known to us from winter nights, looked here twice as large and bright. Soon all the stars of both hemispheres became visible. The Great Dipper hung low just above the horizon, while the Southern Cross rose higher and higher. The light of the full moon dipping in and out among the heaping clouds was simply dazzling. Wonderful is the tropical ocean with its azure-colour and phosphorescent light, wonderful are the tropical sun and clouds, but the tropical night sky over the ocean is the most wonderful thing in the world.

As we approached the equator, the difference in temperature between day and night steadily diminished; 86°F. (in the shade, of course) by day, 84°F. at night; the temperature of the water also 86°F. or 84°F. I did not feel the heat. The magnificent trade wind gives one a sensation somehow of warm coolness. To be sure, it was stifling in the cabins at night; that is why I liked night watch, when one could breathe wonderful air and admire the sky and sea. Owing to the danger from sharks, we doused each other several times a day, instead of bathing in the sea. Once, for a long time, we watched a shark swimming behind our ship. We tried to catch it, but did not succeed, somehow. We often saw whales spouting; flying-fish were visible on both sides of the ship from morning till night. One of them even flew up and tumbled on deck. We made a two or three day call at Porto-Grande on the Cape Verde Islands. A desert and stony island with wretched, scorching vegetation, and a small town with only a coal supply, gave us nevertheless a certain degree of diversion: we had a ride on donkeys, which the negro boys who guided them mercilessly prodded

and beat with clubs. Having taken on a supply of provisions and coal, the clipper started for Rio de Janeiro. We crossed the calm zone under sail. Hot weather, a cloudy sky, frequent rain-squalls, attended our passage through this zone. Gloomy water-spouts in the shape of funnels joining clouds and sea were frequently visible on the horizon. The crossing of the equator was signalized by the usual festival of the Procession of Neptune and water-dousings —a festival described many times in almost every book of travels.

Having crossed the calm zone, we met with southeastern trades, and wonderful tropical weather returned. The nearer we came to the Tropic of Capricorn the lower and lower the Greater Dipper sank (the Polar star had vanished long before), and the Southern Cross shone higher and higher. About June 10 the Brazilian coast came into view; the rock called the Sugar Loaf indicated the entrance to the Bay of Rio de Janeiro, and soon we anchored in the roadstead of Rio de Janeiro itself.

What a striking place! The bay, shut in on all sides, but spacious, is surrounded by green-clad mountains topped by Corcovado, at whose foot the city lies stretched. It was June—the winter month of the Southern Hemisphere. But what a wonderful winter under the Tropic of Capricorn! 77°F. or so in the shade in the daytime, 63.5°–66°F. at night; frequent thunder-storms, but generally clear and mild weather. The water in the bay was green-blue by day and phosphorescent at night, the shores and mountains a gorgeous green. The city and the docks teemed with negroes of every possible shade—from brown to glossy black, some in shirts, some half-naked; the Brazilians dressed in black coats and top-hats. The market was filled with endless quantities of oranges, china-oranges and wonderful bananas; as well as monkeys and parrots. The New World, the Southern Hemisphere, a tropical winter in June! Everything was different, not the same as with us in Russia.

I roamed about a good deal with my comrades, especially with I. P. Andreyeff in the environs of Rio, in the woods and mountains, taking tramps of 20–25 miles a day and enjoying the beauties of nature and the magnificent sights. Several times I went to the Tijuca Waterfalls, and climbed the mountains, Corcovado and Govia. Once our party lost its way and had to stay overnight in the woods, but that was not dangerous, as there are no wild beasts in the environs of the city. I also enjoyed visiting the botanical

garden with its marvellous alley of royal palms, tall and straight as columns. I found pleasure in looking at the wonderful and varied trees of the garden. In addition to the native flora, Asiatic plants grew there too, like the clove-tree, the cinnamon-tree, the camphor laurel, etc. Tiny humming birds and huge butterflies flew about by day, while in the evening gleaming insects flitted in the air.

Two or three days we spent at the Brazilian Emperor's residence, Petropolis, a small town in the mountains. There we made a splendid trip to the Imatoreti Waterfalls, in the surrounding woods of which remarkably tall tree-like ferns grew. Nor can I forget the marvellous long and sombre bamboo alley near Rio which looked like a Gothic arch formed by the touching tops of the bamboo-trees. Altogether we stayed in Rio de Janeiro nearly four months, for the following reason. After a two weeks' stay we had bidden farewell to Rio and had gone southward toward Cape Horn. In the latitude of St. Catherine's Island a strong pamperos blew up; that is the name of the storms which frequently burst forth near the banks of the Rio de la Plata. The wind was very strong, the sea waves rose huge,—but, for some reason, this time the captain kept the clipper under steam. The screw laid bare with each rising of the stern caused a tremendous vibration, soon it turned out that the vessel had sprung a bad leak. It was impossible to proceed; we had to turn to Rio de Janeiro and dock for repairs. A report was forwarded to Russia that the clipper was unseaworthy for a long voyage around the world. The report contained a good many exaggerations; thus in describing the pamperos it said that the ship's deck had been rippling like piano keys. One way or another, repairs were a necessity. The repairs took time, and the report had been sent. The work of repairing kept us at Rio until October, i. e. until orders came from Russia for us to give up the idea of a voyage around the world (to the captain's delight, be it said) and return to Europe.

Having finished the work of patching up the leak, and before the final order to leave for Europe had been received, our clipper went for a few days' artillery practice from Rio de Janeiro to the small island Ilha Grande, situated not far south of Rio. At Ilha Grande we stayed five or six days. It is a mountainous little island, covered with a thick tropical forest. There are sugar and

coffee plantations at one end of it. We walked a great deal in its wonderful woods. Soon after our return to Rio Janeiro from Ilha Grande the orders arrived. By now it was October: the summer was beginning and the heat increasing. Somewhat regretfully, I left Rio with its wonderful natural beauties.

Our clipper headed for Cadiz, where we were to await further instructions. Our return voyage to the Northern Hemisphere was made in some 60 or 65 days. Once more came the wonderful zones of the trade winds, but in reverse order; the appearance of the stars of the Northern Hemisphere and the disappearance of the Southern constellations. Somewhere this side of the equator, it was our good fortune to witness, two nights in succession, an extraordinary phosphorescence of the ocean. Probably we had gotten into the so-called Sargasso Sea, a region abounding in seaweeds and molluscs, which lend special force to the phosphorescence of the water. A rather powerful trade was blowing and the ocean was rough. The whole sea surface from the ship to the horizon was flooded with phosphorescent light which cast its reflection on the sails. Whoever has not seen it, cannot imagine so beautiful a sight! On the third night the phosphorescence of the water diminished and the ocean assumed its nocturnal aspect. We reached Cadiz early in December, I believe. Having remained there some three days, we made, as per instructions, for the Mediterranean Sea. There we were to join, at Villafranca, Lyesovski's squadron, detailed to the now deceased Tsarevich Nikolay Alyeksandrovich, who was ill and spending the winter in Nice. On our way we called at Gibraltar, where we went to see the famous rock and fortifications; we also put in at Port Mahon on the Island of Minorca. To tropical warmth we had long bidden farewell: still the weather was fine, though cool. The same weather greeted us also at Villafranca, which we reached toward the end of December.

At Villafranca we found and joined Lyesovski's squadron. Our stay at Villafranca was varied by short trips to Toulon, Genoa and Spezia. When in Toulon I visited Marseilles, and from Genoa I went to the famous Villa Pallavicini. A pleasant walk to Nice was my usual pastime on days free from duty. I also took walks to the mountains with I. P. Andreyeff. Beautiful stony mountains, olive and orange groves and a magnificent sea, made a

charming impression on me. I managed also to visit the notorious Monaco, where a steamer called *Bulldog* used to run in from Villafranca; it had a reputation for its unusually disagreeable rolling, so that I, who had grown accustomed to ocean rolling, became seasick on the trip to Monaco. I tried my hand at roulette; but having lost several gold pieces, stopped, as I had not developed any taste for the game. There was an Italian opera at Nice at the time, but I did not attend it. During my trips ashore with my comrades, who were fond of music, I often played on the piano Gounod's *Faust* which I had heard in New York. Just then *Faust* was beginning to be popular. I procured a piano score somewhere. My audience were in raptures; truth to tell, I liked it myself a good deal then.

My comrades and I were then already advanced to be midshipmen (i. e. real officers) and admitted to the officer's ward-room.

In April the Tsarevich died. His body was transferred with great ceremony to the frigate *Alyeksandr Nyevski,* and our entire squadron started for Russia. We called at Plymouth and Christiansand. In Norway it was warm in April and everything was in full leaf. From Christiansand I went to see a beautiful waterfall whose name I don't remember. As we were nearing the Gulf of Finland, the weather kept getting colder and colder; we even met with icebergs in the gulf. In the latter part of April we cast anchor in the Cronstadt roadstead.

My sailing in foreign lands was over. Many ineffaceable memories of the wonderful beauties of nature of distant lands and the distant ocean, many mean, coarse and repulsive impressions of naval service I brought back with me from the voyage which had lasted two years and eight months. And what of my music? Music had been wholly forgotten, and my inclination toward artistic activity had been stifled; so stifled that, after having gone to see my mother, my brother's family and Balakireff, all of whom soon left St. Petersburg for the summer season, I did not concern myself with music at all, though I spent the summer in Cronstadt looking after the dismantling of the clipper, and lodging with an officer friend, K. E. Zambrzhitski, who had a piano. I cannot consider as work the playing of sonatas for the piano and violin. The latter was played by amateurs, naval friends of mine, who

visited me from time to time. I myself became an officer-amateur, who was not averse to playing or hearing music; but my dreams of artistic activity had entirely faded, and I felt no sorrow over the dreams that were gone.[1]

[1] Written in February and March 1893.

CHAPTER VI

1865–66

Return to music. Acquaintance with Borodin. My first symphony. Balakireff and the members of his circle. The performance of the first symphony. The musical life of the circle. Overture on Russian themes. My first song.

In September 1865, when the dismantling of the clipper *Almaz* was ended, I was transferred to St. Petersburg with a portion of the first naval crew, of which our clipper's company formed a part, and then began my life ashore and in St. Petersburg.

My brother with his family and my mother returned to St. Petersburg after the summer. My musical friends, Balakireff, Cui and Musorgski, also arrived. I began to visit Balakireff, and again commenced first to get accustomed to music and, later, to plunge into it. Much water had run under the bridges while I was abroad, much that was new had come into the World of Music. The Free Music School had been established; Balakireff and G. Y. Lomakin had become joint conductors of its concerts. On the stage of the Mariinski Theatre *Judith* [1] had been produced and its author Syeroff had made a name for himself as a composer. Richard Wagner had come at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society, had made the music world of St. Petersburg acquainted with his works, and the orchestra had given model performances under his direction. After Wagner's example, all conductors have since turned their backs to the audience and faced the orchestra, in order to have it under their eyes.

During my first visits to Balakireff's I heard that a new member, of great promise, had made his appearance in the circle. He was

[1] The book of this opera is founded on Giustiniani's *Giuditta,* which Syeroff and his librettist had seen Ristori perform. The style of the music is said to recall *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin.* When Wagner visited St. Petersburg in March, 1863 Syeroff submitted the score to him, and the German composer is said to have expressed his approval of the orchestration. C. V. V.

A. P. Borodin. When I removed to St. Petersburg, he was not there, as he had not returned to town after the summer. Balakireff played me fragments of the first movement of his symphony in E flat major, which astonished rather than pleased me. Soon Borodin came; I was introduced to him, and our friendship dated from that time, although he was some ten years older than I. I was introduced to his wife, Yekatyerina Sergeyevna. Borodin was already professor of chemistry at the Medical Academy then, and lived near the Liteyny Bridge in the Academy building. He remained until his death in the same apartment. Borodin liked my symphony, which Balakireff and Musorgski played four-hands. Though he had not finished the first movement of his symphony in E flat major, he already had material for the other movements, which he had composed abroad during the summer. I was delighted with these fragments, having now fully grasped the first movement which had merely astonished me on first hearing. I became a frequent visitor at Borodin's; often staying overnight as well. We discussed music a great deal; he played his projected works and showed me the sketches of the symphony. He was better informed than I on the practical side of orchestration, as he played the cello, oboe and flute. Borodin was an exceedingly cordial and cultured man, pleasant and oddly witty to talk with. On visiting him I often found him working in the laboratory which adjoined his apartment. When he sat over his retorts filled with some colourless gas and distilled it by means of a tube from one vessel into another,—I used to tell him that he was "transfusing emptiness into vacancy." [1] Having finished his work, he would go with me to his apartment, where we began musical operations or conversations, in the midst of which he used to jump up, run back to the laboratory to see whether something had not burned out or boiled over; meanwhile he filled the corridor with incredible sequences from successions of ninths or sevenths. Then he would come back, and we proceeded with the music or the interrupted conversation. Yekatyerina Sergeyevna was a charming, cultured woman, an excellent pianist, and she worshipped her husband's talent.

Our company, now transferred to St. Petersburg, was quartered

[1] The Russian expression for "chewing the rag" or the useless work of the Danaids. J. A. J.

in the Galernaya Gavañ, in the so-called Dyeryabin house. I lived in a furnished room on the 15th Line of the Vasilyevski Ostrov,[1] with a printer or compositor of some sort. For dinner I used to go to my brother's at the Naval School. I could not live with my people at the time, as the Director's apartment, large though it was, had no spare room. My duties did not keep me very busy. Every morning I had to spend two or three hours at the office in the Dyeryabin house, where I had charge of correspondence, scribbled all manner of reports and statements which began: "I have the honour to report to Your Excellency" or "Enclosing herewith a copy, I beg to," etc.

I visited Balakireff very often. Coming in the evening I occasionally remained overnight. My visits to Borodin I have already described. I also visited Cui. Not infrequently our musical company: Balakireff, Cui, Musorgski, Borodin, V. V. Stasoff, and others gathered at the house of one of the above three, and a great deal of four-hand playing was done. Urged on by Balakireff, I turned once more to my own symphony; for the scherzo I wrote the trio which until then had been lacking; again, at his suggestion, I re-orchestrated the whole symphony and made a clean copy of it. Balakireff, then conducting with G. Y. Lomakin the concerts of the Free Music School, decided to produce it and ordered the orchestral parts to be copied. But what a terrible score it was! Of this, however, later; I shall say only: that though I had picked up all sorts of smatterings I did not know the a b c of theory at the time. Nevertheless the symphony in E flat minor was in existence and marked for performance. The concert was announced for December 18th in the hall of the Town Council and was preceded by two rehearsals—the usual number in those days. The conductor's art was then a mystery to me, and I looked with awe upon Balakireff who was of the initiated. His going to the chorus rehearsals of the School and the stories about these rehearsals, about Lomakin, about various things musical and various prominent musical folk of St. Petersburg, all this was full of mysterious fascination for me. I realized that I was a mere boy who had composed something, but that I was also an insignificant ignorant

[1] On the Vasilyevski Ostrov (Vasilyevski Island) every street consists of two *Lines*, the right side of the street (reckoned from the Great Nyeva) being denoted by even numbers (Line 2, 4, etc.), the left side by odd numbers. C. V. V.

C. A. CUI *from the drawing by* I. Y. Ryepin

naval officer who could not even play decently. And there, on the other hand, were the stories about this and that having to do with music, about these or other "real" workers, and with all this Balakireff, who knew everything and was respected by everybody as a real musician. Cui had already entered upon his activities as critic[1] on the *St. Petersburg Vyedomosti* (Korsh's) and hence, beside the love for his compositions, he, too, compelled involuntary admiration as a real worker in the field of art. As for Musorgski and Borodin, I regarded them as comrades rather than teachers like Balakireff and Cui. Borodin's compositions had not been performed as yet, and his first considerable work, the symphony in E flat major had just been begun; in orchestration he was as inexperienced as I, although he knew the instruments better than I did, after all. As for Musorgski, even though a fine pianist and excellent singer (true, no longer in such good voice as formerly) and though of his smaller pieces, a scherzo in B flat major and the chorus from *Œdipus,* had already had public performances under Anton Rubinstein, he yet had little knowledge of orchestration, as his compositions performed in public had gone through Balakireff's hands. On the other hand music was not his specialty and he gave himself over to it only in his leisure hours; his real service lay in one of the ministries. By the way, Borodin told me that he recalled Musorgski still as a very young man. Borodin was on duty as physician in a military hospital and Musorgski was officer on duty in the same hospital, still serving in the Guards then. There it was they had met. Soon after that, Borodin met him again at the house of mutual friends, and Musorgski, a stripling of an officer, speaking French magnificently, was entertaining the ladies by playing something from *Il Trovatore.* What times! I shall observe that, in the sixties, Balakireff and Cui, though very intimate with Musorgski and sincerely fond of him, treated him like a lesser light and of little promise at that, in spite of his undoubted talent. It seemed to them that there was something missing in him and, in their eyes, he was in need of advice and criticism. Balakireff often said that Musorgski had "no head" or that his "brains were weak." Meanwhile the following relations had established them-

[1] From the beginning he spared no effort in his endeavour to suppress the vogue of Italian opera, and to elevate Russian opera to a state of favour. C. V. V.

selves between Cui and Balakireff: Balakireff thought that Cui understood little in symphony and musical forms and nothing in orchestration, but was a past master in vocal and operatic music; Cui, in turn, thought Balakireff a master in symphony, form and orchestration, but having little liking for operatic composition and vocal music in general. Thus they complemented each other, but each, in his own way, felt mature and grown up. But Borodin, Musorgski and I—we were immature and *juvenile*. Obviously, toward Balakireff and Cui, we were in somewhat subordinate relations; their opinions were listened to unconditionally, we "smoked them in our pipes" and accepted them. Balakireff and Cui, on the other hand, really did not need our opinions. Accordingly, the relations of Borodin, Musorgski and myself were those of comrades; but toward Balakireff and Cui—we were in the position of pupils. Moreover, I have already mentioned how I worshipped Balakireff and considered him my alpha and omega.

After successful rehearsals, at which the musicians looked at me with curiosity, since I wore a military coat, the concert itself took place. The program consisted of Mozart's *Requiem* and my symphony. The Myel'nikoff brothers were among the soloists singing in the *Requiem*. I think I. A. Myel'nikoff made his début then. The symphony went off well. I was called out and surprised the audience considerably with my officer's uniform. Many people came to be introduced and congratulated me. Of course, I was happy. I deem it necessary to mention that I felt almost no nervousness before the concert and that scant disposition toward nervousness as author has remained with me all my life. It seems to me the press spoke favourably of my work, though not over-favourably; and Cui wrote a very sympathetic article in the *Peterburgskiya Vyedomosti* (The St. Petersburg Gazette) referring to me as the *first* to compose a Russian symphony (Rubinstein did not count!), and I accepted it on faith that I was the first in the succession of Russian symphonic composers.[1]

Shortly after the performance of my symphony a dinner of the members of the Free Music School took place to which I, too, was invited. Various speeches were made and my health was drunk.

[1] Written at Yalta (Crimea) on June 22, 1893.

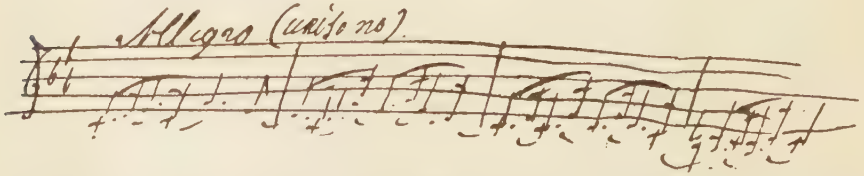
In the spring of 1866 my symphony was performed again, but, this time, not under Balakireff. During Lent, when there were no performances at the theatres, the Board of Directors used to give symphony concerts; originally they had been directed by Karl Schubert, as I have already mentioned, and, after his death, they were entrusted to the opera conductor, K. N. Lyadoff. The Board of Directors of the Theatres wished to perform my symphony also. How it happened—I cannot explain. Probably it was not arranged without Balakireff's influence on Kologrivoff, then supervisor of musicians at the Imperial theatres. I delivered the score to the Board, and my symphony was played under Lyadoff's leadership, with some success. I was not invited to the rehearsals. Evidently both Lyadoff and the Board cared little for me. I was not particularly pleased with the performance, although I recall it was not at all bad. But, in the first place, I felt offended at not having been invited to the rehearsals; secondly, could I possibly be satisfied with Lyadoff, when I had an only God —Balakireff? Moreover, Lyadoff as conductor enjoyed scant favour in Balakireff's circle, as did all conductors, save Balakireff himself. In his articles, Cui often ranked Balakireff, the conductor, with Wagner and Berlioz. In passing, I shall say that at that time Cui had not heard Berlioz as yet. Balakireff himself doubtless believed in his own superiority and power and, to tell the truth, in those days, we knew only him, Anton Rubinstein and Lyadoff, among conductors. In this respect, Rubinstein was in bad repute and Lyadoff was on the down-path owing to loose living. Karl Schubert was remembered rather pleasantly; as to foreign conductors we did not know them except R. Wagner, who was considered a genius in that respect. And so Balakireff was ranked with him and Berlioz, whom only Stasoff remembered. Although I had heard neither Wagner nor Berlioz, I accepted this judgment. Accordingly, I was bound to be dissatisfied with the performance of my symphony at the Board's symphony concert. Still as I recall, there were calls for me.

How the spring of 1866 passed, I cannot recall; all I know is that I composed nothing, but cannot explain why. It must have been because composition was then difficult for me through lack of technique; then, too, by nature I was not industrious. Balakireff did not rush me, did not urge me to work; his own time went sense-

lessly, somehow. I often spent my evenings with him. As I recall, he was then harmonizing the Russian folksongs collected by him, was tinkering a great deal with them and making many changes. I gained a thorough knowledge of the song material collected by him and his method of harmonizing it. Balakireff had at that time a large stock of oriental melodies and dances, memorized during his trip to the Caucasus. He often played them for me and others, in his own most delightful harmonizations and arrangements. My acquaintance with Russian and oriental songs at the time marked the origin of my love for folk-music to which I devoted myself subsequently. As I also recall, Balakireff had the germs of his symphony in C-major. Nearly one-third of the first movement of the symphony had already been written in orchestral form. Besides, there were sketches for the Scherzo and also for the Finale on a Russian theme: *Sharlatarla from Partarla,* that I gave him, as my uncle, Pyotr Petrovich, had sung it to me. The second subject in the Finale was to be the song *A my proso syeyali* (And we were planting millet) in B-minor, approximately as it appeared in his collection of forty songs.

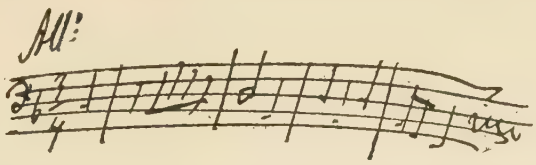
As for the Scherzo, Balakireff once improvised its beginning in my presence:

Subsequently, however, he substituted another for it. The first movement of his piano concerto was ready and orchestrated; there were wonderful designs for the Adagio and the following theme for the Finale:

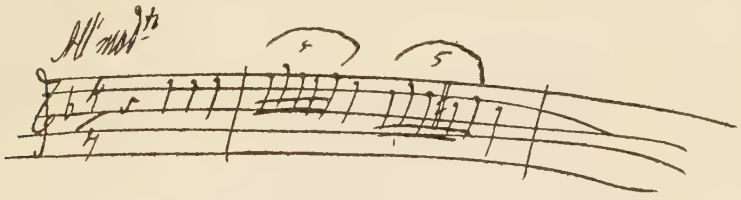


Then, in the middle of the Finale there was to appear the church theme: *"Se zhenikh gryadyet"* (Lo, the bridegroom

cometh), and the piano was to accompany it with an imitation of bell-ringing. In addition, he had the beginnings of an octet or nonet with piano in F-major; the first movement with the theme:



also a charming Scherzo. He was already somewhat cool towards the opera *Zhar Ptitsa* (Fire-bird) which he had conceived; but he played many splendid fragments, based mostly on oriental themes. The lions guarding the golden apples and the flight of the fire-bird were magnificent. I also recall some chants and the service of the fire-worshippers on a Persian theme:



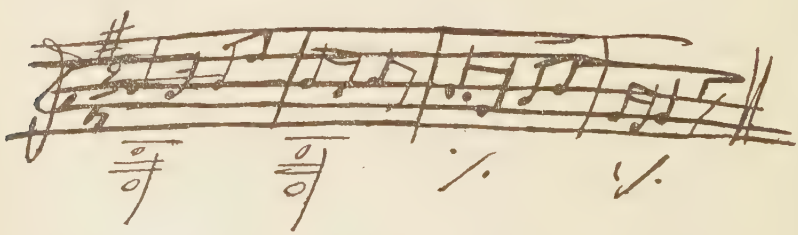
Cui was then composing *William Ratcliff;* if I am not mistaken, the scene at the Black Stone and Maria's aria were already in existence. Musorgski was busy writing an opera on a libretto taken from *Salammbô*.[1] Occasionally he played fragments of it at Balakireff's and Cui's. These fragments called forth the highest approval for the beauty of their themes and ideas as well as the severest censure for disorderliness and absurdity. Madame Cui, I remember, could not stand a noisy and absurd storm in this opera. Borodin went on with his symphony and used to bring portions of the score to be looked over.

What I have described above constituted my staple musical food at that time. I constantly spent my evenings at Balakireff's and visited Cui and Borodin pretty often. But, as stated above, I

[1] Musorgski began this work in 1863, writing his own libretto, in which, as was customary with him, he gave the chorus a conspicous rôle, too conspicuous, perhaps, considering the nature of the subject. He completed, in the course of time, one scene of the second act and one in both the third and fourth acts, and then he put the work aside, and did not return to it except for the purpose of drawing various numbers from it which were transferred to his later works. C. V. V.

composed little or nothing during the spring of 1866 and, toward summer, conceived the idea of writing an overture on Russian themes. Of course, Balakireff's overture *1000 Years* and the overture in B-minor were my ideals. I chose the themes: *Slava* (Gloria), *Oo vorot vorot* (At the gates, the gates) and *Na Ivanushkye chapan* (Ivan has a big coat on). Balakireff did not fully approve the choice of the last two, finding them somewhat similar; but, for some reason, I persisted in my view,—evidently because I had succeeded in writing certain variations on both of these themes and some tricks of harmony, and I was reluctant to part with what had been begun.

I spent the summer of 1866 mostly in St. Petersburg, save one month, when I went on the yacht *Volna* for a sail in the Finnish skerries. On my return from this brief trip, I composed the projected overture, and its score was ready toward the end of the summer. I cannot recall where Balakireff spent that summer, most likely at Klin, with his father. After he had come back in the fall, he frequently played two oriental themes, subsequently utilized by him for his piano fantasy, *Islamey*. The first D flat major theme he had learned in the Caucasus, the other in D-major he had possibly heard that summer in Moscow from some singer, Nikolayeff, I think. Along with these he began to play more and more frequently .the themes of his orchestral fantasy *Tamara*. For the first subject of the Allegro he took a melody which we had heard together while visiting the barracks of His Majesty's bodyguard in *Shpalyernaya* Street. I vividly recall the men, Orientals, making music on a balalayka-shaped or guitar-like instrument. Besides, they sang in chorus the melody of Glinka's *Persian Chorus,* though a variation of it:



In 1866-67 a considerable part of *Tamara* was improvised by him and was often played for me and others. Soon *Islamey,* too,

began to take form little by little. The symphony in C-major had not progressed nor had any of the other beginnings.

Among the pieces of music looked over in Balakireff's circle and played particularly for us, Liszt's compositions, principally his *Mephisto Walzer* and *Todtentanz* figured more and more frequently since the beginning of the year. To the best of my recollection the *Todtentanz* was played for the first time by Gerke, Professor of the Conservatory, at the Russian Musical Society's concert, conducted by Rubinstein in 1865 or 1866. Balakireff used to relate with horror Rubinstein's opinion of this piece. Rubinstein had likened this music to a disorderly trampling of the piano keys or to something like it. Subsequently Rubinstein, though not fond of Liszt, still came to have a different opinion of this work. I recall that the *Todtentanz* struck me rather unpleasantly at first, but soon I fathomed it. On the other hand, *Mephisto Walzer* pleased me infinitely. I purchased its score and even learned to play it passably in my own arrangement. In general, I applied myself that year quite zealously to piano playing, alone in my room. I think I lived then on Tenth Line in a furnished room, at a rental of some ten rubles a month. I diligently conned Czerny's *Tägliche Studien,* played scales in thirds and octaves, studied even Chopin études. These studies were carried on without the knowledge of Balakireff, who never suggested to me work at the piano—though how necessary that was! Balakireff had long given me up as a pianist; usually he played my compositions himself. If occasionally he sat down to play four-hands with me, he would quit playing at my first embarrassment, saying he would rather play it afterwards with Musorgski. In general, he made me feel uncomfortable, and, in his presence, I usually played worse than I really knew how. I shall not thank him for that. I felt that I was making progress in my playing, after all,—working rather hard at home. But I was afraid to play before Balakireff, and he was utterly unaware of my progress; moreover, I was rated "without capacity for playing" by others as well, especially by Cui. Oh, those were wretched times! The circle often made fun of Borodin and myself for our pianistic achievements, and, therefore, we too, lost faith in ourselves. But in those days I had not yet become wholly disillusioned and was striving to learn things on the sly. It is singular that in my

brother's house and at the houses of other people outside of Balakireff's circle, they thought me a good player, used to ask me to play for the ladies and visitors, etc. I played. Many went into ecstasies from lack of understanding. The result was a sort of silly deception.

My service gave me little to do. I was transferred to the Eighth Naval Company, quartered in St. Petersburg. My duties consisted of attendance for the day on the Company and the Naval Department's stores, called New Holland. Occasionally I was assigned for sentry duty at the prison. My musical life began to cleave: in one half, in Balakireff's circle, I was considered a man of talent for composing, a poor pianist or no pianist at all, an amiable and short-witted stripling of an officer; in the other half, among my acquaintances and the relatives of Voyin Andreyevich, I was a naval officer, an amateur, a *splendid* pianist, a connoisseur of serious music, composing something by the way. On Sunday evenings, when young folks, relatives of his wife, would gather at my brother's house, I used to play, for their dances, quadrilles from *La Belle Hélène* or *Marta* of my own manufacture, and occasionally, during the intermissions, would turn pianist, playing with excellent touch some excerpts from operas. At P. N. Novikova's house I astonished them with my skill, playing the *Mephisto Walzer*. At the house of my brother's friend, P. I. Vyelichkovski, I played four-hands with his daughters. Vyelichkovski played the cello, violinist friends of his also came to the house, and I arranged the *Kamarinskaya* and *A Night in Madrid* for violin, viola, cello and piano for four-hands and we played these. Balakireff and his circle had no idea of all these exploits; I carefully concealed from them these dilettante activities of mine.

Balakireff was not pleased with my overture, but having made some corrections and suggestions, nevertheless decided to perform it at a concert of the Free School. The concert took place on December 11, 1866. Together with my overture there was also performed the *Mephisto Walzer*. I remember G. Y. Lomakin, listening to the *Walzer* at the rehearsals, half-closing his eyes as if for pleasure, and telling me: "How Mikhayil Ivanovich (Glinka) loved such music!" What was meant by *such* music? Probably "sensuous, voluptuous," Lomakin meant to say. The *Mephisto Walzer* delighted the whole circle and me, of course.

Balakireff felt himself conclusively a conductor of genius; the whole circle, too, thought likewise. My overture went off well and pleased more or less. I was called out. I recall that it sounded rather colourful and the percussion instruments had been distributed by me with taste. I don't remember the press notices of this performance.

In December, 1866, I think, I wrote my first song: *Shchekoyu k shchekye ty moyey prilozhis'* (Lay thy cheek against my cheek), to Heine's text. Why I conceived the idea of writing it I don't remember. Most likely from a desire to imitate Balakireff, whose songs I admired. Balakireff approved it, but finding the accompaniment insufficiently pianistic, (quite to be expected from me who was no pianist) he recast it entirely and rewrote it in his own hand. With this accompaniment my song was subsequently published.

CHAPTER VII

1866–67

Rognyeda. The circle's attitude toward Syeroff. Writing the *Serbian Fantasy.* Acquaintance with L. I. Shestakova. The Slavic concert. Growing intimacy with Musorgski. Acquaintance with P. I. Chaykovski. N. N. Lodyzhenski. Balakireff's trip to Prague. Writing *Sadko* and songs. Analysis of *Sadko.*

In the season of 1866–67 came the production of *Rognyeda*[1] at the Mariinski Theatre. Having produced *Judith* while I was abroad, Syeroff delivered himself of this second opera of his, after an interval of several years.

Rognyeda created a furore. Syeroff grew a full foot in artistic stature. Balakireff's circle made considerable fun of *Rognyeda,* pointing out that the idol-worshippers' chorus in Act I and a few bars of the chorus in the reception hall were the only decent things in it. I must confess that *Rognyeda* aroused deep interest in me, and I liked a good deal of it, especially the sorceress, the idol-worshippers' chorus, the chorus in the reception hall, the dance of the *skomorokhi* (buffoons), the hunters' prelude, the chorus in 7/4, the finale, and snatches of a good deal more. I also liked its somewhat coarse, but colourful and effective orchestration, whose vigour, by the way, K. N. Lyadoff considerably moderated at rehearsals. All this I did not dare to confess in Balakireff's circle and, as one sincerely devoted to the ideas of the circle, I even berated it before my acquaintances, among whom my dilettante activities were going on. I remember what a surprise it was to my brother, who liked *Rognyeda.* Having heard the opera two or three times, I carried away a good deal and

[1] According to Montagu-Nathan, this opera was produced in 1865. He says that the score "is remarkable for its composer's secession from Wagnerian influences—a retrogression to the style of Halévy is notable therein." For Chaykovski's criticism, see Mrs. Newmarch's *The Russian Opera,* Page 155. Syeroff is represented in Musorgski's *Peep Show* by the quotation of a theme from *Rognyeda.* C. V. V.

played parts of it by heart, occasionally even before the dilettante half. At that time Syeroff in his articles began to inveigh mercilessly against Balakireff as a conductor, composer, and musician in general. He also got into squabbles with Cui and an unimaginable bickering began in the press. Syeroff's relations with Balakireff, Cui, and Stasoff in former days (prior to my appearance on the musical horizon) are a puzzle to me to this day. Syeroff had been intimate with them, but why the break occurred is unknown to me. This was passed over in silence in Balakireff's circle. Snatches of reminiscences about Syeroff, chiefly ironical, reached me in passing. A scandalous story, of unprintable nature, was circulated about Syeroff, etc. When I came into Balakireff's circle, the relations between Syeroff and that circle were most hostile. I suspect that Syeroff would have been glad to make up with the circle, but Balakireff was incapable of conceding it.

In the season of 1866–67 Balakireff gave much of his time to scanning folksongs, principally Slavic and Hungarian. He had a great number of all possible collections everywhere around him. I, too, used to peruse them with the greatest pleasure and with pleasure, too, I listened to Balakireff playing them in his own exquisite harmonizations. During that period he began to show great interest in Slavic affairs. Almost at the same time the Slavic Committee came into being. In Balakireff's apartment I often met Chekhs and other Slavic brethren who came and went.

I listened to their conversations, but I confess that I understood them very little, taking a scant interest in the movement. In the spring, some Slavic guests were expected, and a concert, which Balakireff was to conduct, was projected in their honour. Apparently this concert stimulated the composition of the overture on Chekh themes, and, contrary to his custom, this overture was written rather rapidly by Balakireff. I undertook, at Balakireff's suggestion, to write a fantasy on Serbian themes, for orchestra. In undertaking to compose the *Serbian Fantasy,* I was not at all carried away by Slavism, but rather by the delightful themes Balakireff had selected for me. I wrote the *Serbian Fantasy* rapidly, and Balakireff liked it. In the introduction there is one correction of his or rather an insert of some four bars; with this exception, everything else belongs to me. Save for the disgraceful use of the natural-scale brass instruments, the

instrumentation, too, is satisfactory. Of the fact that chromatic-scale brass instruments had already been introduced everywhere, Balakireff's circle had no inkling then, but, with the benediction of its chief and conductor, it followed the instructions of Berlioz's *Traité d'Instrumentation* regarding the use of the natural-scale trumpets and French horns. We selected French horns in all possible keys in order to avoid the imaginary stopped notes; calculated, contrived, and grew unimaginably confused. And yet all that would have been necessary was a talk and consultation with some practical musician. However, that was too humiliating for us. We followed Berlioz rather than some talentless orchestra leader. But before speaking of the Slavic concert which did not take place till spring, I shall relate the following.

In January or February 1867 Balakireff took me along one evening to see Glinka's sister, Lyudmila Ivanovna Shestakova. He had known and been friendly with her since Glinka's time, but I had not been introduced to her as yet. That evening Lyudmila Ivanovna had visitors, among them A. S. Dargomyzhski, Cui and Musorgski, also V. V. Stasoff. Dargomyzhski was, at the time, reported to have begun composing music to Pushkin's *The Stone Guest.*[1] I recall the dispute Stasoff had that evening with Dargomyzhski over his *Rusalka.* While paying due respect to many parts of the opera, particularly its recitatives, Stasoff strongly reproved Dargomyzhski for much that was weak in his opinion, reproaching him especially for many ritornellos in arias. Dargomyzhski played on the piano one of these ritornellos disapproved by Stasoff; then he closed the piano and gave up the discussion, as if to say: "If you can't appreciate this, there is no use discussing anything with you."

Among Shestakova's guests was one S. I. Zotova, née Byele-

[1] Pushkin's version of the Don Juan legend, which differs considerably from the other versions. A long account of it and a discussion of other uses of the legend may be found in H. Sutherland Edwards's *The Lyrical Drama* (W. H. Allen; London; 1881). The Stone Guest, of course, is the statue of the Commander, which Don Juan invites to dine with him. Dargomyzhski's intention was to write an opera which, in every respect, should exemplify the principles of the new Russian school. He was preoccupied with the task of making the music the handmaid of the text. "With a hardihood," says M. Calvocoressi, "unparalleled at that time in the annals of musical history and which is only to be compared with that of Debussy when planning his *Pelléas et Mélisande,* Dargomyzhski chose, in place of the conventional libretto, the actual text of Pushkin himself." The work was accepted by the group as a model and was known as "The Gospel." C. V. V.

nitsyna, a sister L. I. Karmalina, the famous singer of Dargomyzhski's and Glinka's time. Amid general acclamation she sang several songs, including Balakireff's *Goldfish.* Her singing pleased me greatly and gave me a desire to compose songs: I had written but one thus far. During the spring I composed three more: *The Eastern Romance, The Cradle Song* and *Iz slyoz moyikh* (Out of my tears), and with my own accompaniments, too.

After that I began to visit Lyudmila Ivanovna rather frequently. Balakireff used to be there, too. He liked to play cards on occasion, and at L. I. 's house a card party would be made up for him, of which I never was one, as I could not bear cards; I had no talent for card playing, even less so, perhaps, than for piano playing. Balakireff liked to play cards, but without stakes or for a small stake. The gaming table offered a field for his wit, for he was listened to with profound respect. At times I was doomed to be an onlooker merely in order to see Balakireff home afterwards. In general, he never valued my time nor did he accustom me to value it. A great deal of it was wasted in those days.

In spring our Slav brethren came together and the concert took place at the Town Council Hall on May 12th. At the first rehearsal a small row occurred: the orchestral parts of the *Chekh Overture* proved to contain an incredible number of errors; the musicians were disgruntled. Balakireff fumed. The concert master Vyelichkovski (brother of P. I. whom I have spoken of) made some mistake, and Balakireff said to him: "You don't understand conductor's marks!" Vyelichkovski was offended and walked out of the rehearsal. In the evening, in Balakireff's apartment Musorgski and I helped correct the orchestral parts. The second rehearsal went off without a hitch. Pikkel took Vyelichkovski's place. My *Serbian Fantasy,* too, had its première at this concert.

During the season of 1866–67 I became more intimate with Musorgski. I used to visit him; he lived with his married brother Filaret, near the Kashin Bridge. He played me many excerpts from his opera, *Salammbô,* which greatly delighted me. Then also, I think, he played me his fantasy *St. John's Eve,* for piano and orchestra, conceived under the influence of the *Todtentanz.* Subsequently, the music of this fantasy, having undergone many metamorphoses, was utilized as material for *A Night on Bald Mount.* He also played me his delightful Jewish choruses: *The*

Rout of Sennacherib and *Joshua.* The music of the latter was taken by him from *Salammbô.* The theme of this chorus had been overheard by Musorgski from Jews who lived in the same house as Musorgski and who were celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles. Musorgski also played me the songs which had failed with Balakireff and Cui. Among these were *Kalistrat* and the beautiful fantasy *Night,* on a text by Pushkin. The song *Kalistrat* was a forerunner of the realistic vein which Musorgski later made his own; while the song *Night* was representative of that ideal side of his talent, which he himself subsequently trampled into the mire, though still drawing on its reserve stock in emergency! This reserve stock had been accumulated by him in *Salammbô* and the Jewish choruses, when he took but little thought of the coarse *muzhik.* Be it remarked that the greater part of his ideal style, such as the Tsar Boris's arioso, the phrases of Dmitri at the fountain, the chorus in the Boyar Duma, the death of Boris, etc. were taken by him from *Salammbo.* His ideal style lacked a suitable crystal-clear finish and graceful form. This he lacked, because he had no knowledge of harmony and counterpoint. At first, Balakireff's circle ridiculed these needless sciences, and then declared them beyond Musorgski. And so he went through life without them and consoled himself by regarding his ignorance as a virtue and the technique of others as routine and conservatism. But whenever he did manage to obtain a beautiful and flowing succession of notes, how happy he was! I witnessed that more than once.

During my visits, Musorgski and I used to talk freely, uncontrolled by Balakireff or Cui. I went into ecstasies over much that he played; he was delighted and freely communicated his plans to me. He had many more than I. *Sadko* had been one of his projects in composition, but he had long given up any thought of writing it and therefore offered it to me. Balakireff approved this idea and I set out to compose.

The acquaintance of our circle with Chaykovski belongs to the season of 1866–67. After graduating from the Conservatory, Chaykovski went to live in Moscow, having been asked to join the staff of professors at the Moscow Conservatory. Our circle knew him only as having composed a symphony in G-minor, of which the two middle movements had been performed at the con-

P. I. CHAYKOVSKI *from a drawing by* W. I. BRUCKMAN

certs of the Russian Musical Society in St. Petersburg. As a product of the conservatory, Chaykovski was viewed rather negligently if not haughtily by our circle, and, owing to his being away from St. Petersburg, personal acquaintanceship was impossible. I don't know how it happened, but during one of his visits to St. Petersburg, Chaykovski made his appearance at Balakireff's soirée, and our acquaintance began. He proved a pleasing and sympathetic man to talk with, one who knew how to be simple of manner and always speak with evident sincerity and heartiness. The evening of our first meeting, he played for us, at Balakireff's request, the first movement of his symphony in G-minor; it proved quite to our liking; and our former opinion of him changed and gave way to a more sympathetic one, although Chaykovski's conservatory training still constituted a considerable barrier between him and us. Chaykovski's stay in St. Petersburg was brief, but during the following years, when visiting St. Petersburg, Chaykovski usually came to Balakireff's, and we saw him. At one of these meetings V. V. Stasoff, and all of us for that matter, were captivated by the melodious theme of his overture, *Romeo and Juliet,* which subsequently moved V. V. Stasoff to suggest to Chaykovski Shakespeare's *Tempest* as a subject for a symphonic poem. Soon after our first meeting with Chaykovski, Balakireff induced me to go with him to Moscow for a few days. It was during the Christmas holidays. That winter the well-known Msta Bridge had burned down, and, to reach Moscow, Balakireff and I had to cross the Msta River on peasant sleds to take the train waiting for us on the other bank. We spent all our time at Moscow visiting Nikolay Rubinstein who lived with Chaykovski; Laroche, Dubuque and others. What the object of Balakireff's trip was—it is hard to say. It seems to me he sought closer relations with N. G. Rubinstein. Balakireff had always shown antagonism to Anton Rubinstein's activity, denying his talent as a composer and belittling, as much as possible, his great gifts as a pianist. As a pianist of higher standing, in contrast to him, Nikolay Grigoryevich Rubinstein was usually mentioned. At the same, the latter was pardoned his artistic indolence and tempestuous life, both explained as the result of the queer Moscow life. On the other hand, the slightest thing was counted against Anton Grigoryevich. As for me, Balakireff dragged me to Moscow merely that he might

not be lonesome and as a sort of aide-de-camp. Otherwise it is hard to explain our trip to see people we were not intimate with.

During that season, one more member, Nikolay Nikolayevich Lodyzhenski joined our musical circle.[1] Lodyzhenski, an erstwhile wealthy landowner gone to ruin, was a young man of education, queer, easily carried away and endowed with a strong, purely lyric talent for composition, and a fairly good piano technique in the performance of his own compositions. These consisted of a huge number of improvisations mostly unrecorded. Among them were to be found separate numbers and beginnings of symphonies and even of an opera *Dmitri Samozvanyets* (The False Dmitri) wedded to a non-existent and merely projected libretto; and finally, mere musical fragments belonging nowhere in particular. All of this, however, was so graceful, beautiful, expressive, and even technically correct that it forthwith won the attention and good-will of all of us. Among his compositions we particularly admired the wedding scene of Dmitri and Marina, and a Solo with chorus for Lyermontoff's *Rusalka.* As a result of his Russian dilettantism, all of these remained unfinished, with the exception of a few songs which were subsequently completed and published at the solicitation of myself and others.

Among the events of 1866-67 must be also mentioned Balakireff's trip to Prague to stage *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* the première of which took place on February 5, 1867, under Balakireff's leadership.[2]

At this date I do not recall Mili Alyekseyevich Balakireff's numerous stories of Prague, of rehearsals and of the performance of *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* At all events, they centred around the intrigues with which the Russian conductor found himself surrounded among Chekh musical and theatrical folk. A dark shadow hung also over the composer Smetana who was then the opera house conductor and was to lead the preliminary rehearsals prior to Balakireff's arrival. Often it turned out that Glinka's

[1] At present writing, Russian Consul in New York City. Note by Madame Rimsky-Korsakova.

[2] In Appendix I the reader will find three memoranda given me by L. I. Shestakova at my request: one in her own hand and two dictated by her. These contain a brief account of the production of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* at Prague and of the printing of the score of that opera.

music had been misunderstood. Thus Lyudmila's aria in Chernomor's castle, 3/4, B-minor (Act IV), had been studied in an exceedingly quick tempo. Just before the first performance the orchestral score had been "mislaid" somewhere, but Balakireff came out triumphant at that critical pass: to the great surprise and bewilderment of those endeavouring to trip him he led the whole performance from memory. According to Balakireff it was an overwhelming success, and the opera went off in fine style. He had especial praise for the baritone Lev (Ruslan) and the bass Palecek (Farlaf). Shortly afterwards the latter left the Prague opera, settled in St. Petersburg and joined the company of the Mariinski Theatre. Here he subsequently was made stage manager and coach, supervising the production of all operas including mine, beginning with *Mlada*. Balakireff's trip to Prague gave rise to intercourse with the above-mentioned brethren who came to St. Petersburg.

When summer came, my friends left. Balakireff went I do not recall where, possibly to the Caucacus again. Musorgski left for the country, Cui went to a summer cottage somewhere, etc. I stayed in town alone, as my brother's family lived at Tervajoki, near Vyborg. During that summer and the following autumn I composed *Sadko* and eight songs (Nos. 5-12); and my first four songs, to my great delight, were set up at Balakireff's solicitation and published by Bernard (who, quite as a matter of course, never paid me a cent).[1]

In September, 1867, our musical circle which had scattered for the summer now assembled again. The orchestral score of *Sadko* which I had begun on July 14th was completed September 30th. My *Sadko* won general approval, particularly its third movement (dance in 2/4 time), and quite properly, too.

What musical tendencies guided my fancy when I composed this symphonic picture? The Introduction—picture of the calmly surging sea—contains the harmonic and modulatory basis of the beginning of Liszt's "Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne" (modulation by a minor third downward). The beginning of the Allegro 3/4, depicting Sadko's fall into the sea and his being dragged to the depths by the Sea King, is, in method, reminiscent of the moment

[1] Written at Riva, June 19, 1906.

when Lyudmila is spirited away by Chernomor in Act I of *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* However, Glinka's scale, descending by whole notes, has been replaced by another descending scale of semitone—whole tone, semitone—whole tone, a scale which subsequently played an important rôle in many of my compositions. The D-major movement, Allegro 4/4, depicting the feast in the Sea King's realm, harmonically and, to a certain degree, melodically as well, recalls partly Balakireff's *Song of the Goldfish* which was then a favourite of mine and the introduction to Rusalka's recitative in Act IV of Dargomyzhski's opera *Rusalka.* The dance theme (D flat major) of the third movement as well as the cantabile theme following it, are entirely original. The variations on these two themes passing into a gradually swelling storm were composed partly under the influence of certain passages in the *Mephisto Walzer,* partly as representing certain echoes of Balakireff's *Tamara,* then still a long way from completion, but familiar to me from the excerpts played by its author. The closing movement of *Sadko,* as well as its introductory movement, ends with a beautiful chord passage of independent origin. The principal tonalities of *Sadko* (D flat major —D-major—D flat major) I selected to please Balakireff, who had an exclusive predilection for them in those days. The form my fantasy assumed was due to the subject I had chosen, but the episode of the appearance of Saint Nicholas was unfortunately left out by me, and the strings of Sadko's goosli [1] had to break by themselves, without the good Saint's assistance. Taken by and large, the form of *Sadko* [2] is satisfactory, but I gave too much space to its middle movement in D-major, 4/4 (feast in the Sea King's realm) as compared with the picture of the calm sea and the dance to Sadko's playing; a fuller development with transition to the storm would be very desirable. I am somewhat discontented with the brevity and sparseness of this composition, in general,—a composition for which broader forms would be more suitable. If long-windedness and verbosity are the faults of many composers, my fault at the time was over-conciseness and laconism, and these were due to my lack of technique. Never-

[1] A native instrument, a kind of horizontal harp with from five to seven strings. C. V. V.

[2] *Sadko* is said to have been the first Russian symphonic poem. C. V. V.

theless the originality of my task; the form resulting therefrom; the freshness of the dance theme and the singing theme with its purely Russian turn which had laid its impress also on the variations, second-hand, however, as to their method; the orchestral colour scheme caught as by miracle, despite my imposing ignorance in the realm of orchestration,—all these made my composition attractive and worthy of attention on the part of many musicians of various tendencies, as proven subsequently. Balakireff, whose voice was predominant and decisive in our circle, paid my work a certain tribute of patronizing and encouraging admiration. This attitude of his toward me lasted in general, until I began to manifest my personal *ego* in the creative field. Then he began to cool little by little toward this *ego,* which no longer sent back so strongly the echoes of Liszt and himself.

CHAPTER VIII

1867–68

Concerts of the Russian Musical Society. Berlioz. The circle's achievements in composition. Soirées at Dargomyzhski's. Acquaintance with the Purgold family. Writing of *Antar* and first thought of *Pskovityanka* (The Maid of Pskov). The Popular Concert. Analysis of *Antar*. Trip to visit Lodyzhenski. Composing *Pskovityanka*.

The season of 1867–68 at St. Petersburg was a very busy one. Through Kologrivoff's representations to the Grand Duchess Yelyena Pavlovna, the conductorship of the Russian Musical Society concerts was offered to Balakireff, and, at this latter's insistence, Hector Berlioz himself was invited to conduct six concerts. The concerts led by Balakireff were interspersed with those of Berlioz, who led for the first time on November 16th. At the Balakireff concerts the following numbers among others were given: Introduction to *Ruslan and Lyudmila;* Chorus from *Le Prophète* (A. K. Lyadoff and G. O. Dütsch, two boys, pupils of the Conservatory and sons of well-known musicians, were in the chorus); Wagner's *Faust Ouvertüre* (the only work of that composer respected in our circle); Balakireff's *Chekh Overture;* my *Serbian Fantasy* (a second time), and lastly my *Sadko* at the concert of December 9th. *Sadko* went off well; the orchestration satisfied everybody, and I was called out several times.

Hector Berlioz came to us already an old man; though alert at rehearsal, he was bowed down with illness and therefore was utterly indifferent to Russian music and Russian musicians. Most of his leisure time he spent stretched out on his back complaining of illness and seeing only Balakireff and the Directors. Once, he was entertained at a performance of *A Life for the Tsar* at the Mariinski Theatre, but left before the end of the second act. On another occasion there was some sort of dinner of the Board of Directors with V. V. Stasoff and Balakireff, which Berlioz could

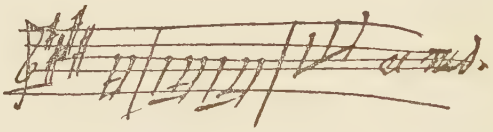
not escape. I imagine that it was not ill-health alone, but the self-conceit of genius as well as the aloofness becoming a genius that were responsible for Berlioz's complete indifference to the musical life of Russia and St. Petersburg. Foreign notabilities used to concede and still concede with very haughty airs some musical importance to the Russians. There was no talk even of Musorgski, Borodin and myself meeting Berlioz. Whether Balakireff had felt embarrassed to ask Berlioz for permission to introduce us, feeling as he did Berlioz's utter unconcern in the matter, or whether Berlioz himself had asked to be spared the necessity of meeting the young Russian composers of promise,—I cannot say; all I remember is that we ourselves had not courted this meeting and had not broached the subject to Balakireff.

At his six concerts Berlioz performed *Harold en Italie; Épisode de la vie d'un Artiste;* several of his overtures; excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Damnation de Faust;* several trifles; also Beethoven's Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and excerpts from Gluck's operas. In a word—Beethoven, Gluck and "I"! However, to those must be added the overtures of Weber's *Der Freischütz* and *Oberon.* Of course, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann were omitted, not to speak of Liszt or Wagner.

The execution was excellent; the spell of a famous personality did it all. Berlioz's beat was simple, clear, beautiful. No vagaries at all in shading. And yet (I repeat from Balakireff's account) at a rehearsal of his own piece Berlioz would lose himself and beat three instead of two or vice versa. The orchestra tried not to look at him and kept on playing, and all would go well. Berlioz, the great conductor of his time, came to us when his faculties were already on the decline, owing to old age, illness and fatigue. The public did not notice it, the orchestra forgave him. Conducting is a thing shrouded in mystery.

Having become the leader of the Russian Musical Society concerts, Balakireff became also the official conductor for the concerts of all sorts of soloists like Auer, Leschetizky, Cross, concerts which began in Lent according to the custom of the time. Mention must be made of one notable rehearsal he led on behalf of the Russian Musical Society, in the hall of the Mikhaylovski Palace, to try out the accumulation of new Russian compositions. The principal number at this try-out was Borodin's First Symphony in

E flat major, then just finished by the composer. Unfortunately a wealth of mistakes in the badly copied parts stood in the way of a fairly decent and uninterrupted performance of this composition. The musicians fretted at the incorrectness of the parts and continual halts. Still it was possible to judge of the great merits of the symphony and its magnificent orchestration. In addition to Borodin's symphony, there were performed an overture by Rubyets; an overture by Stolypin, (a composer who forthwith vanished from the musical horizon) ; also an overture and entr'actes to Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell,* by A. S. Famintsyn [1] (professor of Musical History at the St. Petersburg Conservatory), a rather well-read but talentless composer, and conservative and dull music critic. By the way, the following funny episode occurred between him and Balakireff. When Famintsyn had announced to Balakireff that he had written music to *Wilhelm Tell,* Balakireff, without a moment's thought, inquired whether he had the following theme:



Famintsyn was exceedingly offended and never could forgive Balakireff this sally.

Our circle's work of composition now presented this aspect: Balakireff was finishing or had already finished his *Islamey,* a piece considered very difficult to perform. He often played it for us, in parts or its entirety, and gave us great delight thereby. As I have already mentioned, the principal subject of *Islamey* had been jotted down by him in the Caucasus; the second, subsidiary subject (like a trio) had been given him in Moscow by some opera singer, a Grusian or Armenian by descent, possibly Nikolayeff by name.

If I am not mistaken, when Musorgski returned from his summer stay in the country, he brought the wonderful *Svyetik Savishna* (Savishna, my Darling) and *Hopak* (to Taras Shevchenko's words) which he had composed; and with these he began his series of vocal compositions with the stamp of genius in their originality, I mean *Po griby* (Picking Mushrooms), *Soroka* (The Magpie),

[1] Musorgski ridiculed this pedant in *The Classicist* and *The Peep Show.* C. V. V.

And so on, crescendo, with the figuration of the motive growing more and more frequent, and finally fortissimo

Repeat these four bars an octave lower (Clar-Fag)

Sketches for RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF'S *Second Symphony*

Kozyol (The Billy-goat), etc. which began to follow each other in rapid succession.

Cui was completing his wonderful *Ratcliff*, swiftly composing one number after another.

Borodin was completing the score of his First Symphony, a trial performance of which I mentioned earlier. Besides, the idea of an opera on the subject of *Prince Igor* had been germinating since the season before this and the first sketches and improvisations for this work were on hand. The operatic scenario had been jotted down by V. V. Stasoff who also had been the first to conceive the idea of this composition. Borodin, for his part, was making a conscientious study of *The Story of Igor's Band* and the Hypatian Chronicle, for the development and libretto of his opera. The composition of his song *Spyashchaya Knyazhna* (The Sleeping Princess) belongs to the same period.

Lodyzhenski was inexhaustible in improvising most interesting fragments which usually came to nothing, though a few of them were subsequently developed into his published songs.

As for me, I was attracted by the idea of writing a second symphony in B-minor, again a favourite key with Balakireff. Since the preceding year there had been running through my head material for a 5/4 Scherzo (E flat major) which was to be one of the movements of the projected symphony. The beginning of the first movement, as well as some of its mannerisms recalled the beginning of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.[1]

The second subject (D-major) had an unwelcome resemblance to Cui's theme in the trio of the chorus *Syny svobodniye Kavkaza* (Free Sons of Caucasus), while the concluding cantabile phrase, of more independent origin, I subsequently incorporated into *Snyegoorochka* (Mizgir: *"O lyubi menya, lyubi!* Oh, love me, love me!).

I brought my Symphony only as far as the "development." My form of exposition of the themes did not satisfy Balakireff, nor my other friends, either. I was disappointed. Balakireff was utterly incapable of explaining to me the defects of form with any approach to clearness. As was his wont, instead of terms borrowed from syntax and logic, he used culinary terms, saying that I had sauce and cayenne pepper, but no roast beef, etc. Owing to ignor-

[1] See cut on opposite page.

ance, the terms: period, clause (half period), passage, addition, etc. did not exist then in Balakireff's vocabulary and consequently not in ours; and everything in musical forms was vague and puzzling. I repeat I was disappointed in my musical offspring and soon abandoned or postponed indefinitely the idea of writing a second symphony.

Living alone, as before, in a furnished room on the Vasilyevski Island, and taking dinner at my brother's, I spent my evenings mostly at Balakireff's, Borodin's, Lodyzhenski's, more seldom at Cui's; Musorgski, too, I saw frequently. I also visited the Byelyenitsyn sisters [1] who lived with their mother. Musorgski and I had long talks on art. With Lodyzhenski we spent entire evenings on improvisations and various experiments in harmony. At Borodin's he and I used to examine the score of his symphony, talk of *Prince Igor* and *The Tsar's Bride;* to compose this opera was at one time Borodin's passing dream, as it later became mine. Borodin's day was rather queerly arranged. His wife, Yekatyerina Sergeyevna, who suffered with insomnia at night, had to have a nap during the day and often got up and dressed at 4 or 5 P. M. Occasionally they had dinner at 11 P. M. I often stayed till 3 or 4 A. M. and, to get home, had to cross the Nyeva in a skiff, as the old wooden Liteyny Draw was opened for the night.

In the latter half of the season, toward the spring of 1868, most of the members of our circle met almost every week at Dargomyzhski's, who had thrown his doors open to us. He was then composing *The Stone Guest* at white heat. Its first tableau had been completed; the second tableau was ready up to the duel scene, and the rest was being composed almost under our very eyes, to our great delight! Until then Dargomyzhski had surrounded himself with admirers who were amateurs or musicians much inferior to him: Shchligleff; Sokoloff (author of several songs and conservatory inspector); Dyemidoff and others. But now that he had devoted himself to writing *The Stone Guest,* an advanced work whose importance he clearly saw,—he came to feel the need of sharing with leading musicians his newly crystallized musical ideas. Accordingly, he made a complete change in the personnel of the circle surrounding him. Now the frequenters of his

[1] The older sister was then separated from her husband Zotoff; subsequently Princess Golitsyna.

soirées were: Balakireff, Cui, Musorgski, Borodin, V. V. Stasoff and I, as well as Gen. Velyaminoff, a music-lover and devoted singer. In addition, there were among Dargomyzhski's regular visitors the young sisters Alyeksandra and Nadyezhda Nikolayevna Purgold with whose family he had long been on friendly terms. Alyeksandra Nikolayevna, a high mezzo-soprano, was a fine, talented singer; Nadyezhda Nikolayevna, a highly-talented musical temperament, was an excellent pianist, pupil of Gerke and Zaremba.[1]

Each soirée at Dargomyzhski's showed *The Stone Guest* to have progressed markedly in regular succession, and the newly written fragment was immediately performed by the following cast: the author, in the hoarse voice of an old man, interpreted, nevertheless, Don Juan splendidly; Musorgski was Leporello and Don Carlos; Velyaminoff—the Friar and the Commander; A. N. Purgold—Laura and Donna Anna, and Nadyezhda Nikolayevna took the piano. Occasionally the songs of Musorgski were sung (by the composer and A. N. Purgold) or the songs of Balakireff, Cui, and myself. My *Sadko* and Dargomyzhski's *Finnish Fantasy* were played in Nadyezhda Nikolayevna's arrangement for four-hands. These evenings were exceedingly interesting.

By the end of spring our circle had formed an acqaintance with the Purgold family. Their family consisted of the mother Anna Antonovna; three sisters—Sofya Nikolayevna (subsequently Mme. Ashkharumova), Alyeksandra Nikolayevna and Nadyezhda Nikolayevna; and their elderly uncle Vladimir Fyodorovich, a man of splendid spirit who was like a second father to the Purgold girls. The other Purgold sisters were married, and the brothers lived by themselves. The gatherings at the Purgolds' were also exclusively musical. The playing of Balakireff and Musorgski, four-hands playing, Alyeksandra Nikolayevna's singing, and talks about music made these gatherings interesting. Dargomyzhski, Stasoff and Velyaminoff came to these evenings also. Gen. Velyaminoff was amusing: holding on to the accompanist's chair; invariably hold-

[1] Zaremba was satirized in Musorgski's *Peep Show* as that "denizen of cloudland" who addressed his pupils somewhat in the following manner:

"Mark my words: the minor key
Is the source of man's first downfall;
But the major still can give
Salvation to your erring souls." C. V. V.

ing a key in his right hand for some unknown reason; with one leg flung behind the other, straining himself to sing *Svyetik Savishna* (Savishna, my Darling) panting for lack of breath, and imploring his accompanist, at nearly every bar in 5/4 time, to give him a chance to catch his breath. Having gasped out his plea, he resumed singing,—then immediately appealed again: "Let me catch my breath!" etc. Afflicted with heart disease, Dargomyzhski did not feel quite well at that time; yet, carried away by his work of composing, he kept up courage, was cheerful and animated.

Having indefinitely postponed writing the symphony in B-minor, I turned to Syenkovski's (Baron Brambeus) beautiful tale *Antar*, at Balakireff's and Musorgski' suggestion: on this subject I had planned to compose a symphony or symphonic poem in four movements. The desert; the disillusioned Antar; the episode with the Gazelle and the bird; the ruins of Palmyra; the vision of the Peri; the three joys of life—revenge, power and love,—and finally Antar's death,—all of this was tempting to a composer. I set to work in midwinter. The birth of the first idea of an opera on the subject of Mey's *Pskovityanka* [1] (Maid of Pskov) belongs to the same period. This idea again was suggested to me by Balakireff and Musorgski who were better read in Russian literature than I. At that time Act I of the play (now the Prologue) seemed to present some difficulty. At a general conference it was decided to do away with it, and begin the opera directly with the *goryelki* [2] scene; then have the drift of the prologue conveyed in some way in the dialogue between Tsar Ivan and Tokmakoff. The question of libretto had not been raised; it was assumed that I would write the libretto myself as need arose! However, for the time being, work on *Antar* came to the fore with me. Save for the principal theme of Antar himself, which I had composed under the indubitable influence of certain phrases of *William Ratcliff*, and the Peri Gül Nazar's theme with its florid Oriental embellishments,—all the other themes purely cantabile, (the 6/8 melody in F sharp major in the First Movement, and 4/4 A-major melody—the accessory subject of the Third Movement) I had borrowed from a French collection of Arab melodies of Algiers, which

[1] This opera is now generally known as *Ivan the Terrible.* C. V. V.
[2] A Russian catching game. J. A. J.

Borodin happened to possess. As for the principal subject of the Fourth Movement, it had been given to me, with his own harmonization, by Dargomyzhski, who, in turn had taken it from Khristianovich's collection of Arab melodies. For the beginning of the Adagio of this Movement I retained Dargomyzhski's original harmonization (English horn and two bassoons). The First and the Fourth Movements of *Antar* were finished by me during the winter of 1867–68 and won praise from my friends, except Balakireff, who approved them with reservations. The Second Movement, *Joy of Revenge,* in B-minor, which I had composed at the same time, proved a complete failure, and I left it unused. In passing, let me remark that in the spring of 1868, while I composed *Antar,* some signs of coolness sprang up between Balakireff and me for the first time. I was in my twenty-fifth year, and independence which had been gradually awakening in me, began to assert itself by that time: Balakireff's cutting paternal despotism was growing burdensome. It is hard to state exactly what were these first signs of coolness; but soon my utter frankness toward Mili Alyekseyevich began to decrease as did, later, the need of frequent meetings. It was pleasant to come together and spend an evening with Balakireff but, possibly, it was still more pleasant to spend the evening without him. It seems to me I was not alone in this feeling, that the other members of our circle shared it; but we never talked of it to each other nor did we criticize our older comrade. I say *older,* meaning in rank and importance. Cui was a year older than Balakireff, and Borodin was a year older than Cui.

Late in the spring the writing of *Antar* was interrupted by another work; Balakireff made me orchestrate Schubert's Grand March in A-minor, for Kologrivoff's Popular Concert at the Manège. The orchestration of a considerable work of somebody else, with abundant forte and tutti in addition, proved doubtless a task much harder than the orchestration of works of my own fancy,—for one who knew as little as I did in this field. For such work the most important requisite was familiarity with instruments and orchestral devices, as well as experience,—experience possessed by every good workman-like leader. I possessed a certain amount of orchestral imagination, and it had served me in good stead in writing my own compositions, but experience I had none. Nor did Balakireff possess any, and there was none

to instruct me. The instrumentation proved lifeless, pallid and useless for any purpose whatever. Still the March was played, but it failed to make much impression.

V. A. Kologrivoff, reputed to be a good amateur-cellist, was inspector of orchestras of the Theatre Board of Directors and one of the founders and directors of the Russian Musical Society. As Inspector of theatre orchestras he was in a position to bring together all orchestral musicians and arrange monster concerts at the Mikhaylovski Manège. The first of these concerts had taken place in the Spring of 1867 under the leadership of Balakireff and K. N. Lyadoff. The second concert was conducted by Balakireff alone in the spring of 1868. A vast chorus participated in addition to the orchestra. Herewith I reproduce verbatim the rather interesting bill of that concert:

Sunday, May 5, 1868, Concert by A. Kologrivoff at the Mikhaylovski Manège

Part I

1) Introduction to the Oratorio of *St. Paul*	Mendelssohn
2) *Gloria Patri* (Chorus without orchestra)	Turchaninoff
3) Prayer *Ne perdas* (with orchestra)	Dargomyzhski
4) Funeral March	Chopin-Mauer
5) Excerpts from *Stabat Mater*	L'voff
a) He who without grief and sorrow	
b) O eternal avenger of sin	
6) Symphonic work, with the national anthem	Rubinstein

Part II

1) Introduction to a Biblical Legend	Mendelssohn
2) *Gloria Domini* (Chorus without orchestra)	Bakhmetyeff
3) Introduction to *Fuite en Égypte*	Berlioz
4) Fragment of a Psalm	Bortnyanski
5) March for the Coronation of Nicholas I, orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakoff	Schubert
6) *Bozhe Tsarya khrani* (God save the king!)	

M. A. Balakireff, Conductor

All these choruses of Turchaninoff, Bortnyanski and Bakhmetyeff were nothing but these authors' orthodox canticles performed in Latin, because the censor did not permit the perform-

ance of orthodox ecclesiastic canticles at concerts, together with profane music. The chorus of oriental hermits, to a text by Pushkin, with the words *Ne perdas* prefixed in order to mislead the ecclesiastical censor, thus came into the class of such quasi-catholic prayers. Rubinstein's symphonic work with the national anthem was but his *Festouvertüre* renamed for a similar reason. Thus, with the help of some masquerading the ecclesiastic censor with his absurd regulations was duped.

When summer came, the members of our circle left for various parts, as usual. Dargomyzhski, Cui and I remained in St. Petersburg. The Purgolds went to their summer home at Lyesnoy.

As in former summers, I lived at the Naval School, in the Director's apartment of my brother. It was unoccupied, as my brother went on a practice cruise, while his family and my mother went to pass the summer at Tervajoki near Vyborg.

During the summer of 1868 I composed the Second Movement in C sharp of *Antar* (in place of the former failure in B-minor) and the Third Movement (*Joy of Power*). Thus the work on *Antar* had been almost completed in score by the end of summer. I named this work, (rather unfortunately, too), my *Second Symphony;* many years later I renamed it a *Symphonic Suite.* The term Suite was then unfamiliar to our circle in general, nor was it in vogue in the music literature of Western Europe. Still, I was wrong in calling *Antar* a symphony. My *Antar* was a poem, suite, fairy-tale, story or anything you like, but not a symphony. Its structure in four separate movements was all that made it approach a symphony. Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* and *Épisode de la vie d'un Artiste* are incontestable symphonies, despite being program music. The symphonic development of the themes and the sonata form of the First Movements of these works remove all doubt as to incongruity between their content and the requirements of symphonic form. On the other hand, the First Movement of *Antar* is a free musical delineation of the consecutive episodes of the story, save that they are musically unified by the ever-recurring theme of Antar himself. It has no thematic development whatever; only variations and paraphases. In general the music of the introduction (the desert, Antar and the episode of the gazelle), enfolding, as it were, the scherzo-like E sharp major part in 6/8; again, forming as it does the conclusion of the First

Movement, gives the latter a rounded structure, with suggestions of an incomplete tripartite form. The Second Movement *(Joy of Revenge),* in structure, brings more to mind the sonata form; yet it is built upon a single fundamental theme of Antar himself and upon the introductory phrase of threatening character. The first subject is in reality a development of these motives: Antar's theme and the introductory phrase. There is no subsidiary subject,—its place is taken by the same theme of Antar in its original complete form (Trombones in A-minor). Then follows the development of the same material omitting only the moment of the return to the first subject. This leads directly to Antar's complete theme (Trombones in C sharp minor), which serves as subsidiary subject. Then follows a coda on the introductory phrase and a soothing conclusion, again on Antar's principal theme. The Third Movement *(Joy of Power)* is a species of triumphal march (B-minor—D-major) with a subsidiary oriental cantabile melody and a conclusion on Antar's theme. Then follows a sort of middle part and light development of the two principal subjects; return to the principal subject of the march; transition to Antar's concluding theme, and coda built on the subsidiary oriental subject. The conclusion is a diverging passage of chords on an ascending 8-step scale—(tone, semitone, tone, semitone, etc.), which I had once before used in *Sadko.*

The Fourth Movement *(Joy of Love),* after a brief introduction borrowed from the First Movement (Antar reappears amid the ruins of Palmyra), is an Adagio. It is built in the main on the cantabile Arab subject (which Dargomyzhski had given me) and its development, together with the phrase of the Peri Gül Nazar and Antar's principal theme. In form it is a variety of simple rondo with one subject and subsidiary phrases (which are episodic and enter, now here, now there, into a passage-like "working-out"), with a long coda on Antar's and Gül Nazar's themes. Accordingly, in spite of its rounded forms and the constant use of symphonic development,—*Antar* is, after all, no symphony: something different is associated in my mind with the conception of symphonic form. Then, also, the tonalities of the four movements of *Antar* present an unusual succession: F sharp minor—F sharp major; C sharp minor—B-minor—D-major; and lastly D flat major (as a dominant of F sharp).

When I examine the form of *Antar* now, after the lapse of many years, I can affirm that I did well with this form, exclusive of outside influences and hints. If the form of Movement I flows from the form of the very narrative, the tasks of depicting the joys of revenge, power and love, on the contrary, are purely lyrical tasks calling for no fixed form: they merely denote moods and their changes, and thus allow complete freedom of musical structure. Where I got, at the time, this coherence and logic of structure, this knack of inventing new formal devices, it is hard to explain; but now that I examine the form of *Antar* with an experienced eye, I cannot help feeling considerable satisfaction. Only a certain excessive brevity of form of Movements I and II in *Antar* fails to satisfy me. The task called for broader forms, but in default of accessory subjects, the difficulty, nay even the impossibility, of giving Movement II a broader development is almost obvious. A certain incoherence is felt in the choice of the key of C sharp minor for Movement II in connection with the key of F sharp in Movement I and B-minor in Movement III. But, speaking generally, the play of tonalities in the individual movements of the composition is interesting, beautiful and legitimate. The distribution of the keys shows that, at the time, there was awakening in me a sense of the interplay of tonalities and their inter-relation,—an understanding that served me well throughout my subsequent musical activity. Oh, how many composers including Dargomyzhski and Wagner, too, if you like, are devoid of this understanding! To the same period also belongs the development in me of an ever keener sense of the absolute significance or shade of each key. Is this sense exclusively subjective or does it depend upon certain general laws? I think both views are true. You will not find many composers who do not consider A-major the key of youth, merriment, spring, and dawn; but they are inclined to use this key to express conceptions of deep thought or a dark starry night. In spite of my inevitable blunders, due to ignorance of elementary truths and methods, *Antar,* as compared with *Sadko,* was a long step forward in the matter of harmony, figuration, contrapuntal experiments and orchestration. The combinations of certain motives, the intertwining of one with another, were happy thoughts; for instance: the accompaniment of the singing theme of Movement III by a rhythmico-melodic dance figur-

ation; or the appearance of Antar's theme in *flauto* during the figuration of the violas; or the sustaining of the two-note motives as against the rhythm of the cantabile theme in D flat major in Movement IV. One cannot help feeling the felicity of the introductory phrase of threatening character and the harmony it forms in Movement II. The chord passages bringing Movement III to a close as well as the passages which depict the bird of prey in pursuit of the gazelle—are original and logical.

In the instrumentation there were new departures, and felicitous applications of familiar devices: the low registers of flutes and clarinets, the harp, etc; Antar's principal theme, entrusted to the violas, as I recall it, in order to please Musorgski who was especially fond of violas. Familiarity with the score of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and Liszt's *Symphonische Dichtungen* made themselves evident. The three bassoons, subsequently reduced to two, pointed to the influence of the orchestration of *Eine Faust Ouvertüre.* Nor was the writing of *Antar* uninfluenced by the orchestration of Balakireff's *Chekh Overture.* Taken as a whole—the orchestration was full of colour and fancy; in the forte passages there came to my rescue my invariable instinctive striving to fill out the middle octaves,—a device that even Berlioz had not always employed. The general musical influences perceptible in *Antar,* emanated from Glinka's Persian Chorus (The E-major variation on the subsidiary subject in Movement III) and his Chorus of Flowers, in Act IV of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Introduction in F sharp major in Movement I and beginning of Movement IV); they came from Liszt's *Hunnenschlacht* and Wagner's *Eine Faust Ouvertüre* (in Movement II of *Antar*). Moreover, certain methods of Balakireff's *Chekh Overture* and *Tamara* and the influence of random phrases from *William Ratcliff* were constantly felt in the music of *Antar.* The triplet figuration which accompanies Antar's theme in Movement III was due to a similar figuration in the finale of *Rognyeda;* only mine is better and more subtle than Syeroff's. The abundant use of oriental themes lent my composition an odd turn of its own, hardly in wide use until then, and the happily chosen program gave it additional interest. It seems to me that I had properly understood the possibility of expressing the joy of revenge and of love by external means; the

former as a picture of a bloody battle, the latter as the gorgeous milieu of an Eastern potentate.

In addition to this, at the request of Cui, who was in a hurry to finish the score of his *William Ratcliff,* I orchestrated during the summer of 1868 the first number of his opera, the wedding chorus in C-major and the blessing of the betrothed. The orchestration of another's composition, and mainly with *tutti,* was a task beyond my powers, and it brought poor results. Nevertheless this number was performed at the Opera with my orchestration. As a rule, orchestration gave Cui trouble in those days and somehow interested him but little. In many instances he had to seek Balakireff's advice and mine. But what useful advice could I give him at that period? In passing I may mention that Maria's well-known romanza in Act III was orchestrated by Balakireff.

I visited the Purgolds at their summer home in Lyesnoy for the first time in company with Dargomyzhski and the Cuis; we went by carriage. Afterwards, I went there alone many a time. The two songs *Night* and *Secret* that I wrote that summer were dedicated to the Purgold sisters: the former to Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and the latter to Alyeksandra Nikolayevna. Among the events of my life during that summer must also be mentioned my trip to Ivan Nikolayevich Lodyzhenski's estate (Kashin canton of the Tver Government) where the Borodins were summering. Nikolay Nikolayevich Lodyzhenski, who early in the summer had been lodging in St. Petersburg in a tiny room near the church of Nikola Trunila (on the St. Petersburg side), was leaving in July for his estate and asked me to come along. I remember that sitting one day at home, in my brother's apartment, I received his note in which he had appointed the day of departure. I recall how the picture of the impending trip to the dreary interior of Russia instantly brought an access of indefinable love for Russian folk-life, for her past in general and for *Pskovityanka* in particular. How, under the pressure of these sensations, I sat down at the piano and then and there improvised the theme of the Chorus of Welcome which the Pskov people sing to Tsar Ivan (Act II, First Tableau), for I had been thinking of the opera while composing *Antar.* At Makovnitsy, the estate of the brothers Lodyzhenski, I spent pleasantly the better part of a week: I watched the *khorovods* (round

dances); I rode horseback with my hosts and Borodin and exchanged all manner of musical ideas with the latter, at the piano. During my stay at Makovnitsy, Borodin composed his song *Morskaya Tsaryevna* (The Sea Princess) with its curious seconds in the figurations of the accompaniment. By the way, let me mention the song I had heard in the *khorovod* at Makovnitsy,

though, to my regret, for some reason or other, I could not later utilize it.

Upon returning to St. Petersburg, having completed *Antar,* I turned to some parts of *Pskovityanka,* wrote the tale *"Of Tsaryevna Lada,"* also made a rough draft of the chorus *Po malinu, po smorodinu* (We're off for raspberries, for currants) and the *goryelki* game. A. N. Purgold was a magnificent interpreter of my tale. V. V. Stasoff went into raptures, he rumbled and he grumbled. However, he was not the only one to like the tale.

CHAPTER IX

1868–70

Musorgski's *Wedding*. Concerts of the Russian Musical Society. Death of Dargomyzhski. *Nizhegorodtsy* and *William Ratcliff* at the Mariinski Theatre. *Boris Godunoff*. Concerts of the Free Music School. Gedeonoff's *Mlada*. Completing the orchestration of *The Stone Guest*. Songs.

The beginning of the season of 1868–69 found me in possession of a fully finished score of *Antar*. Musorgski returned to St. Petersburg with Act I of Gogol's *Wedding* ready, in a draft for voice and piano. Borodin brought new fragments of *Prince Igor*, the beginning of his Second Symphony in B-minor and the song *Morskaya Tsaryevna* (The Sea Princess). The songs *The False Note* and *Otravoy polny moyi pyesni* (My songs with poison are filled) he had composed earlier. Cui had completed *William Ratcliff* and immediately submitted it to the Theatrical Board of Directors. *The Stone Guest* was also complete, except for the finale of Tableau I, left unfinished, for some reason,—beginning with Leporello's words: *Vot yeshcho? Kuda kak nuzhno!* ("And now comes this! And this was all we needed!") Early in the season, Dargomyzhski's soirées recommenced. *The Stone Guest* used to be sung in its entirety. The *Wedding* also roused considerable interest. We were all amazed at Musorgski's task, enthusiastic about his characterizations and many recitative phrases, but perplexed by some of his chords and harmonic progressions. Musorgski himself sang Podkolyosin with his native inimitable talent; Alyeksandra Nikolayevna sang Fyokla; Velyaminoff sang Styepan; Nadyezhda Nikolayevna played the accompaniments, while Dargomyzhski, his liveliest interest roused, copied Kochkaryoff's part in his own hand and sang it with enthusiasm. Everybody was particularly amused by Fyokla and Kochkaryoff,—the latter expatiating about "nasty little mailing clerks; nasty little rascals," etc., with a most amusing characterization in the accompaniment.

V. V. Stasoff was in ecstasies. Dargomyzhski occasionally said that the composer had gone a bit too far. Balakireff and Cui considered the *Wedding* a mere curiosity with interesting declamatory moments.

However, having composed Act I, Musorgski could not make up his mind to go on with the *Wedding.* His thoughts turned to Pushkin's *Boris Godunoff,* and soon he set to work. Moreover, he simultaneously began to write his *Dyetskaya* (Nursery)—that series of quaint compositions for voice and piano, which Alyeksandra Nikolayevna Purgold interpreted so finely.

The health of Dargomyzhski—he was suffering from heart disease—had been on the downward path since the autumn of 1868, and his soirées ceased. He used to say: "If I should die, Cui will complete *The Stone Guest* and Rimsky-Korsakoff will write the instrumentation." As I have already said, *The Stone Guest* was finished except for a few lines. In our circle Cui was considered a vocal and operatic composer par excellence, since *William Ratcliff* was his third opera, although *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *The Mandarin's Son* had not been produced as yet. As for me, I had the reputation of a talented orchestrator. I really did possess a gift for orchestral colouring, along with a liking for purity in part writing and harmony, but I had neither experience nor fundamental knowledge.

I don't remember whether Wagner's *Lohengrin* had its first performance at the Mariinski Theatre early in the fall of 1868 or in the post-Lenten season the spring before. K. N. Lyadoff conducted. Balakireff, Cui, Musorgski and I were in a box with Dargomyzhski. *Lohengrin* called forth utter scorn on our part, and an inexhaustible torrent of humour, ridicule and venomous caviling on the part of Dargomyzhski. Yet at that time Wagner had already half-finished his *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and had composed *Die Meistersinger,* in which with experienced and skilful hand, he had broken new paths for art, far, far in advance of us advanced Russians. I don't recall whether it was then or in regard to later *Lohengrin* performances that Cui wrote the article: *"Lohengrin, or Punished Curiosity."* This article was dedicated to me, although the fact was not mentioned in the *St. Petersburg Gazette,* where Cui functioned as musical critic.

In the season of 1868–69, Balakireff conducted all of the Russian

Musical Society's Concerts, except one which Nikolay Rubinstein had been invited to lead. Rubinstein gave the *Sakuntala* overture and Anton Rubinstein's *Ocean Symphony,* and also played concertos of Liszt and Litolff. The programs of Balakireff's concerts were exceedingly interesting. There were performed: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Leonore* Overture; Schumann's Second Symphony and "Overture, Scherzo and Finale"; Berlioz's three movements of *Romeo and Juliet* and Act II of the opera *Les Troyens à Carthage* (chase; Naiads; storm in the forest); Liszt's *Les Préludes* and two episodes from Lenau's *Faust;* Glinka's *Kamarinskaya* and the chorus: *Pogibnyet!* (He shall perish!); Dargomyzhski's *Finnish Fantasy* (1st time) and choruses from *Rusalka.* There is nothing surprising in the fact that excerpts from *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Act IV) or *Rusalka* were in those days numbers of interest at symphonic concerts: *Ruslan* was given with enormous cuts, while *Rusalka* was not given at all.

Probably under pressure from the Directors of the Russian Musical Society, Balakireff also decided to add to the programs of his concerts the *Vorspiel* to Wagner's *Meistersinger* which he hated. About the performance of this number Syeroff wrote that any second violin of the orchestra could have conducted it as well as Balakireff. Of course this was only a prejudiced thrust on the part of the far from impartial Syeroff. The programs included the following works by members of our circle: Borodin's Symphony, my *Antar* and the *Chorus of Welcome* from *Pskovityanka,* the theme of which I have mentioned already. The programs of Balakireff's concerts provoked all sorts of attacks on the part of Syeroff, Rostislav (pen-name of Fyeofil Matveyevich Tolstoy) [1] and Professor Famintsyn. They were exasperated by the lack of classical numbers on the programs and by such novelties as Borodin's Symphony; by the partisanship shown in the partiality for works of the members of the circle (or *"mighty koochka,"* i. e. coterie as V. V. Stasoff had tactlessly called our circle) and also by the absence of works of Syeroff, Famintsyn, etc. The frontal onslaughts were directed by the offended Famintsyn at Borodin's symphony. Its performance at the concerts had not passed off without a hint of hisses. The critics also found fault with Balakireff's

[1] Caricatured in Musorgski's *Peep Show* as professing an undying admiration for Patti. C. V. V.

interpretation. On the other hand, Cui found it beyond all praise in his articles in the *St. Petersburg Gazette.* Between Cui and the critics referred to, there was a constant wrangling, caustic remarks, bantering, in a word, party polemics in full swing. In passing, the *St. Petersburg Gazette* also dug its claws into talentless Wagner and Rubinstein, sour-sweet, bourgeois Mendelssohn, and dry, childish Mozart, and so forth and so on in the same manner. The adverse party hurled accusations of ignorance, partisanship, and *koochkism* (clannishness).

My chorus from *The Maid of Pskov* was hardly noticed. *Antar*, auspiciously played for the first time on March 10, 1869, found favour as a whole, and I was called out. Balakireff who had not approved of it in general and had condemned its Second Movement in particular, said, nevertheless, at the first rehearsal, after he had played that movement: "Yes, it is really very fine!" I was pleased. After the performance of *Antar,* F. M. Tolstoy (Rostislav) stated his doubts to me about the possibility of expressing in music the joy of power. I do not remember what Syeroff and Famintsyn wrote of *Antar.* After the performance of *Sadko*, Famintsyn burst forth in a censorious article, in which he accused me of imitating the *Kamarinskaya* (sic!). This led Musorgski to create his *Classicist* which ridiculed the critic of the "rueful countenance." In its middle part, at the words: "I am foe of the newest artifices," there appeared the motive recalling the sea in *Sadko.* By singing his *Klassik* Musorgski gave considerable amusement to all of us, particularly V. V. Stasoff.

Towards the end of 1868 Dargomyzhski's health grew steadily worse; if I am not mistaken, volvulus had now been added to heart disease, and the news of his death came as a bolt on January 5, 1869. By agreement with his heirs, *The Stone Guest* was entrusted to me for orchestration, Cui being requested to finish the first scene.

At the beginning of winter, Napravnik's opera *Nizhegorodtsy* (The People of Nizhni-Novgorod) had its first performance at the Mariinski Theatre; *William Ratcliff*, too, was being prepared for production under Napravnik's leadership. K. N. Lyadoff who was killing himself with drink was ending or had ended his career as a conductor. The date of his death I can't recall.

With regard to the production of *Nizhegorodtsy*, Cui found

himself in an awkward position: one had to write about *Nizhegorodtsy,* and Cui did not expect that the opera would be much good. Yet Napravnik was to begin rehearsing his *Ratcliff.* Cui found a way out by urgently pleading with me to write a review of *Nizhegorodtsy.* Being a naïve soul, I undertook the task: for a friend nothing is too steep. *Nizhegorodtsy* was given, and I wrote the desired review. I frankly disliked the opera, and my review was unfavourable, smacking of Cui himself in style and method. The characteristic expressions "Mendelssohnian leaven," "bourgeois ideas" and the like, were there aplenty. The article appeared above my full signature. Naturally it spoiled my relations with Napravnik for the rest of my life: soon afterwards we met and then I was in for it during my entire activity as operatic composer. Of course, Napravnik never permitted himself even a mention of my review; but I don't think he ever forgot it. The rehearsals of *William Ratcliff* commenced soon after. Through Cui, I became a habitual attendant at these. I liked everything in *Ratcliff,* including the orchestration. I watched Napravnik closely and marvelled at his ear, his executive ability, his familiarity with the score. The première was in February. The opera was well received by the audience. The cast (Myelnikoff, Platonova, Lyeonova, Vasilyeff I and the rest) did their best, and everything went well. Subsequent performances grew more slipshod, as the custom had long been and is to this day. Still the audiences, even though they did not quite fill the theatre, listened to the opera with attention and received it with favour. My career as a critic had not run its course with the review of *Nizhegorodtsy*: Cui asked me to review *Ratcliff* for the *St. Petersburg Gazette.* The review was written and turned out to be an unmistakable panegyric as regards both composition and author, a panegyric springing from an honest heart, but a small critical mind. However, my unrestrained enthusiasm for that composition of the highest talent, at the moment of its first appearance, was natural on my part. In the article I expressed certain opinions, categorical yet undoubtedly correct. For instance, I boldly declared that the love-duet of Act III was the finest love-duet in all contemporary musical literature. V. V. Stasoff highly complimented me on this opinion. Strange that Cui, who naturally entertained a very high opinion of his opera, should have preferred to this duet many other

passages like the so-called scene "at the Black Stone," for instance. The composer also attached considerable importance to Lesley's comical pranks. These were the very scenes which our circle considered weaker moments.

I need not add that all the other music critics of St. Petersburg fell upon Cui and his opera with the greatest exasperation, and thereby prejudiced considerably the opinions of the public.

Having ended the series of Russian Musical Society Concerts, Balakireff gave one more concert at the Free Music School, with Schumann's First Symphony and Mozart's *Requiem* on the program. I must make a correction: Syeroff's saying that any second violin player of the orchestra could have conducted as well as Balakireff, referred, perhaps, to Mozart's *Requiem* and not to the *Meistersinger* vorspiel, as I have said before. But I think that really makes no difference: Syeroff's opinion remains partisan and is striking in its partiality and unfairness. At all events, the criticisms and intrigues of the adverse party (Syeroff strove with might and main to get on the Board of Directors of the Russian Musical Society) were responsible for the impaired relations between Balakireff and the Board of Directors. The latter were displeased with him. So was the Muse Euterpe (The Grand Duchess Yelyena Pavlovna). Probably Balakireff, intolerant, tactless and unrestrained, was also somewhat to blame for the dissatisfaction that had developed. There were rumours that a year earlier the Grand Duchess, who had then been well-disposed toward Balakireff, had graciously offered to send him abroad, that he might get in touch with the musical world, but he scornfully refused the offer. Possibly these are mere stories, but, at any rate, Balakireff refused to conduct the concerts of the R. M. Society. This led to an unequal struggle lasting several years between him and the R. M. Society, a struggle between progress and conservatism. One day, in the spring of 1869, I called on Balakireff and found there A. M. Klimchenko, one of the Directors of the Russian Musical Society. From a few words of the conversation, which was about to close when I came in, I judged that the conversation had been conclusive.

When *The Stone Guest* had been handed over to me, I set to orchestrating it. Tableau II was completed during the spring.

Besides this, the composition of *Pskovityanka* was progressing little by little.

The summer of 1869 went by quite uneventfully for me. I lived in my brother's unoccupied apartment, and went for a while to Tervajoki, to see his family. I had no acquaintances in St. Petersburg. The Purgolds had a summer home in Pyetyerhoff. Work on *Pskovityanka,* in sketches, progressed now consecutively, and now at random. My official duties consisted of boresome work as officer of the day and in guard-mounting.

The season of 1869–70 was noted for Balakireff's struggle with the Directors of the R. M. Society, whose concerts had been entrusted to E. F. Napravnik. Rivalry between the concerts of the Russian Musical Society and those of the Free Music School became the main object of Balakireff's activity as conductor, from the moment of his break with the Board of Directors. The School's five concerts were announced, and, with them, began a war to the knife. The programs of the concerts were splendid, very interesting and advanced. I quote them in full.[1]

On the whole, the programs of the R. M. Society's Concerts were also not devoid of interest, though more conservative. The concerts began, and with them began newspaper wrangling, too. The audiences of the Musical Society were not over large, nor were those at the Free Music School. But the Musical Society had money, while the Free School had none. The result was a deficit at the concerts and the utter impossibility of undertaking concerts the following season; on the other hand, the R. M. Society was fully able to continue its concerts during the following years,— accordingly, victory was theirs. I shall not describe the tension with which Balakireff's entire circle and all those close to it watched the fight between the two concert organizations, sympathizing with one and wishing all manner of obstacles to the other. The R. M. Society, in the persons of its representatives, preserved the Olympic calm of officialdom, while Balakireff's excited state of mind was obvious to all.

In connection with the performance of *Sadko* I made a fresh copy of the score, and some corrections and improvements. Through Balakireff's intervention, *Sadko* was given to Jurgenson of Moscow to be published as an orchestral score and in an ar-

[1] cf. Appendix II.

rangement for four-hands by Nadyezhda Nikolayevna Purgold. The latter also undertook the task of making a four-hands arrangement of *Antar* which was then on the presses of Bessel. As far as I recollect, Jurgenson as well as Bessel paid me one hundred rubles for the publishing rights of these compositions.

During this very season Musorgski submitted his completed *Boris Godunoff* to the Board of Directors of the Imperial Theatres. It was examined by a committee consisting of: Napravnik—the opera conductor, Mangeant and Betz—the orchestra conductors of French and German drama respectively; and the double-bass player, Giovanni Ferrero; it was rejected. The freshness and originality of the music nonplussed the honourable members of the committee, who reproved the composer, among other things, for the absence of a decently important female rôle. Indeed, there was no Polish act in the original score; consequently Marina's part was lacking. Much of the fault-finding was simply ridiculous. Thus the double-basses *divisi* playing chromatic thirds in the accompaniment of Varlaam's song were entirely too much for Ferrero, the double-bass player, who could not forgive the composer this device. Musorgski, hurt and offended, withdrew his score, but later thought the matter over and decided to make radical changes and additions. The Polish act in two tableaux and the scene *Near Kromy* were new conceptions. The scene in which the story of the False Dmitri's excommunication is told: "There came out, brethren, a deacon, burly and big and yelled at the top of his lungs: 'Grishka Otrepyeff has been damned!' " etc. was done away with and the Yurodivy (Simpleton) was transferred from this scene to that of the one *Near Kromy*. This Tableau had been planned as the last but one of the opera, but subsequently the composer relegated it to the end. Musorgski set zealously to work on the above changes, in order to re-submit his revised *Boris Godunoff* to the Board of Directors of the Imperial Theatres.

Within the same period falls the following work allotted to the members of our circle. Gedeonoff, Director of the Imperial Theatres at the time, had conceived the idea of producing a work which should combine ballet, opera and spectacle. For this purpose he had written the program of a stage performance in four acts on a subject, borrowed from the Elba Slavs, and had

commissioned V. A. Kryloff to work up the text. *Mlada,* with its mixture of fantasy and every-day reality, was a most grateful subject for musical treatment. Gedeonoff asked Cui, Borodin, Musorgski and myself to compose the music for it; moreover, Minkus,[1] the official ballet composer of the Imperial Theatres, was to compose the incidental ballet music. Who the initiator of this order was, I do not know. I suspect here the influence of Lukashevich, an official of the Board of Directors of the Theatres, who had begun to gain power under Gedeonoff. Lukashevich was intimate with the singer, Y. F. Platonova, and the famous O. A. Pyetroff, and these two were in high favour with L. I. Shestakova. Thus some sort of working connection was springing up between our circle and the Director of Theatres. I also believe that the thing had not happened without V. V. Stasoff's having something to do with it. The four of us were invited to Gedeonoff's for a joint deliberation on the work. Act I, as the most dramatic, was entrusted to the most dramatic composer—Cui; Act IV, in which the dramatic moments were blended with moments of elemental force, was entrusted to Borodin; Act II and III were distributed between Musorgski and myself. Some portions of Act II (folk-wise choruses) were assigned to me; the first half of Act III (flight of shadows and appearance of Mlada) was reserved for me; while Musorgski undertook the second half-appearance of Chernobog (Black God), for which he wanted to utilize his *Night on Bald Mount,* heretofore unused.

The thought of *Mlada* and the few sketches I made for it took me away from *Pskovityanka* and the work on *The Stone Guest.* Cui composed the whole first act of *Mlada* rather rapidly. Borodin, who had been somewhat disappointed in writing *Prince Igor,* now took much of the suitable material from it, composed some new music also and thus wrote almost the whole draft of Act IV. Musorgski composed the *March of the Princes* on a Russian theme (subsequently published separately, with the *Trio alla Turca*); as well as some other portions of Act II; he also made suitable changes in his *Night on Bald Mount* and adopted it for Chernobog's appearance in Act III of *Mlada.* On the other hand, my notes of the chorus in Act II and flight of shadows in Act III

[1] The composer who collaborated with Léo Delibes in the ballet, *La Source,* for the Paris Opéra. C. V. V.

were still uncompleted and nothing would come of them, owing to a certain haziness and indefiniteness of the task of writing music to a scenario insufficiently worked out.

Gedeonoff's scheme was not destined to be realized. Soon he left the post of Director of Imperial Theatres and vanished from sight. The *Mlada* affair dropped into oblivion, and all of us turned to the work we had left for it; whatever we had composed for *Mlada,* found its way into other compositions, later. I set to orchestrating *The Stone Guest;* in March I orchestrated Tableau I, and then the turn came for work on the composition of *Pskovityanka.* For the time being, my work was limited to pondering and writing the outline. Of the orchestral score there existed only the *Chorus of Welcome* (later re-written and calling for an added orchestra on the stage), and Vlasyevna's fairy-tale with Styosha's preceding scene, which had been orchestrated in October, 1869.

The summer of 1870 was a repetition of the preceding one: I lived in my brother's unused apartment and went to Tervajoki on a two-months leave. I had no acquaintances in St. Petersburg, except one family whom I visited every now and then,—the family of Blagodareff, a classmate of mine at the Naval School and a great lover of music. The Purgolds had gone abroad this time, and the Misses P. read proof on Musorgski's *Seminarist,*[1] which was on the presses at Leipzig, because conditions of censorship precluded its publication in St. Petersburg. Besides *The Maid of Pskov,* the sketch of which was growing at a snail's pace, I worked on the orchestration of Tableaux III and IV of *The Stone Guest,* and therewith all work on this offspring of Dargomyzhski's muse was finished during my stay at Tervajoki. In addition to this, the songs: *Gdye ty, tam mysl' moya lyetayet* (Where thou art, there flies my thought); *The Hebrew Song; V tsarstvo rozy i vina pridi* (Come to the realm of the rose and the wine!); *Ya vyeryu, ya lyubim* (I believe I am loved); *K moyey pyesnye* (To my song) were conceived and written partly in the summer and partly in the winter of the same year.[2]

[1] This song portrays the amorous preoccupations of a theological student. C. V. V.
[2] Written at Riva sul Lago di Garda, July 14, 1906.

CHAPTER X

1870–71

Orchestration of *Pskovityanka.* Entering on professional duties at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

The season of 1870–71 proved barren of activities for the Free Music School. The money in hand had been spent on the five concerts of the preceding season; a temporary lull in the battle with the Directors of the Russian Musical Society was unavoidable. Balakireff was forced to submit to circumstances; nevertheless, the thought of resuming the rivalry the next year did not leave him. He expected to bide a year without concerts and therefore without expenses for concerts, and then, having improved the financial status of the School, resume concert activity with the season of 1871–72. With *Islamey* completed, Balakireff's activity as a composer came to a standstill: the work of writing *Tamara* stopped, and he became completely absorbed in the thought of the coming concerts. Nevertheless he showed no reluctance to playing his *Islamey* as well as music by other people, at the soirées of L. I. Shestakova and the Purgolds.

In December, Anna Antonovna, the mother of the Purgolds, fell ill and died, and the gatherings at their house were broken up. In February, I began to work assiduously on the orchestration of *Pskovityanka,* which was nearly ready in the rough by then. During February, Act I, as far as the beginning of the duet of Toocha with Olga, was orchestrated. I cannot recall why, but the writing of my score was interrupted for three months and resumed only in June. The summer of 1871, as in the preceding years, I lived in the apartment of my brother, Voyin Andreyevich. During that summer, Musorgski never left St. Petersburg at all or else for a short time only, returning very soon. I met him often; usually he came to see me. During one of his visits I introduced him to my brother, who had come to the city for a few

days, from his cruise. My brother had been brought up on the music of the palmy days of Italian opera in St. Petersburg; nevertheless he listened with deep interest to excerpts of *Boris Godunoff* which Modest gladly played at his request. Musorgski and I frequently called on the Purgolds, who now lived in First Pargolovo, by a lake. N. N. Lodyzhenski, who spent that summer in St. Petersburg, once accompanied me when I called on them.

All summer I worked hard on the score of *Pskovityanka.* Act I and II and Tableau I of Act III were entirely ready in orchestral score between June and September.

During the summer of 1871, an important event occurred in my musical life. One fine day there came to me Azanchevski, who had just entered upon his duties of Director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory vice N. I. Zaremba, retired. To my surprise, he asked me to join the staff of the Conservatory as Professor of Practical Composition and Instrumentation as well as Professor, i. e., leader, of the Orchestra Class. Evidently Azanchevski's idea was to invite new blood in my person and thus freshen up teaching in these subjects, which had grown mouldy under Zaremba. The performance of my *Sadko* at a concert of the R. M. Society during the season just ended manifestly had been a preliminary step on Azanchevski's part to get into closer relations with me and prepare public opinion for this unexpected call to me to become professor at the Conservatory. Realizing that I was totally unprepared for the proposed appointment, I gave Azanchevski no definite answer and promised to think the matter over. My friends advised me to accept the offer. Balakireff, the only one to realize how unprepared I was, insisted on an answer in the affirmative, his main object being *to get one of his own men* into the hostile Conservatory. The urgings of my friends and my own delusions, perhaps, won the day, and I accepted the offer. In autumn I was to become a professor at the Conservatory, without, for the time being, giving up my Naval uniform.

Had I ever studied at all, had I possessed a fraction more of knowledge than I actually did, it would have been obvious to me, that I could not and should not accept the proffered appointment, that it was foolish and dishonest of me to become a professor. But I, the author of *Sadko, Antar*, and *The Maid of Pskov,* compositions that were coherent and well-sounding, compositions

that the public and many musicians approved, I was a dilettante and knew nothing. This I frankly confess and attest before the world. I was young and self-confident; my self-confidence was encouraged by others, and I joined the Conservatory. And yet, at the time, I not only could not decently harmonize a chorale, had not written a single counterpoint in my life, but I had hardly any notion of the structure of a fugue; nay, did not even know the names of augmented and diminished intervals, of chords, (except the fundamental triad), of the dominant and chord of the diminished seventh, though I could sing anything at sight and distinguish chords of every sort. The terms "chord of the sixth" and chord of "six-four" were unknown to me. In my compositions I had aimed at correctness of part-writing and attained it instinctively and by ear; correctness of the grammar of music I also attained instinctively. Also, my ideas of musical forms were vague, especially of rondo forms. I, who had instrumentated my compositions with a good deal of colour—had not the requisite information as to the technique of bow instruments, of the real keys (that were used in practice) of French horns, trumpets, and trombones. As to the conductor's art, having never conducted an orchestra, nor even rehearsed a single choral piece, of course, I had no conception of it. And now Azanchevski took it into his head to offer a professorship to a musician so ill-informed, and the musician accepted without blinking.

Perhaps it will be said that all the above information which I lacked was unnecessary to the composer of *Sadko* and *Antar;* and that the very fact that *Sadko* and *Antar* existed proved that that information was unnecessary. To be sure, to hear and recognize an interval or a chord is more important than to know their names, the more so as those names can be learned in a day, if need be. It is more important to orchestrate colourfully than to know the instruments, as military band masters know them, who orchestrate by routine. Of course, to compose *Antar* or a *Sadko* is more interesting than to know how to harmonize a protestant chorale or write four-part counterpoint, which seems to be necessary for organists alone. But it is shameful not to know such things and to learn of their existence from one's own pupils. Moreover, soon after composing *Pskovityanka,* the lack of contrapuntal and harmonic technique displayed itself in the abrupt

cessation of my creative fancy, at the basis of which lay the self-same devices that I had ridden to death; only the development of a technique that I bent all my efforts to acquire, permitted new living currents to flow into my creative work and untied my hands for further activity as a composer. In any case, with the information I possessed, it was wrong to take up professional duties, duties that involved pupils of all possible sorts: future composers, conductors, organists, teachers, etc.

But the step had been taken. Having bound myself to guide the Conservatory pupils, I had to pretend that I knew everything and that I understood all the problems of all the pupils. I had to resort to general remarks: in this I was helped by my personal taste, my sense of form, understanding of orchestral colouring and a certain fund of experience in the general practice of composition; but I myself had to catch information from pupils, on the fly, so to speak. In the orchestra class I had to summon all possible self-control to my assistance. I was aided in this by the fact that at first none of my pupils could imagine that I knew nothing; and by the time they had learned enough to begin to see through me, I had learned something myself! What came of all this later on? The first students who graduated from the Conservatory in my time, Haller, Lujer and Startseff, were Zaremba's pupils entirely and had learned nothing from me. Kazbiryuk, (a talented individual who fell to drinking and went to the dogs subsequently), who graduated from the Conservatory two or three years after I had joined it, was also entirely Y. I. Johansen's pupil in harmony and counterpoint; if he learned anything from me at all, it lay in a certain taste in instrumentation and in the general tendency of his compositions. Indeed, Zaremba kept his pupils on Gluck, Mozart, Cherubini and Mendelssohn, whereas I direced them to Beethoven, Schumann and Glinka, who, indeed, were more modern and more to their liking.

Beginning with 1874, I undertook to teach harmony and counterpoint. Having thoroughly familiarized myself with orchestral instruments, I acquired a fair technique,—that is, I untied my hands for my own work of composition. On the other hand, I began also to be of some use to my pupils as a practical teacher. The subsequent generations of pupils who came to me from Johansen or those who later began their studies directly

under me, were really my pupils and probably will not deny it. Thus having been undeservedly accepted at the Consevatory as a professor, I soon became one of its best and possibly its very best *pupil,*—judging by the quantity and value of the information it gave me! Twenty-five years after, when my Conservatory friends and the Board of Directors of the R. M. Society honoured me with jubilee greetings and speeches, I expressed this very thought in reply to Cui's address. Thus matters stood in the Class in Theory of Composition and Practical Composition. In the Orchestra Class things were somewhat different.

Having begun rather auspiciously as conductor in the Orchestra Class, I kept that class at a fairly high level. As early as the second year, the Students' Soirées had the assistance of the orchestra under my leadership. Once I tried my complete Third Symphony in this class, but the rehearsal was a failure, as the pupils who played from manuscript made innumerable errors. Yet I had no heart to weed out mistakes and make the pupils learn the symphony; I did not want to exploit the student orchestra under my control nor to divert it from its regular assigned work and exercises. Generally speaking, my orchestra class got along well, if not brilliantly. Nevertheless, among some of my colleague professors, the desire to conduct the accompaniments for the solo numbers of their pupils was so ardent that they frequently pushed their way into the orchestral class for that purpose; I yielded the conductor's bâton to them out of politeness—really, perhaps, out of my innate easy-going disposition. Of course, I was a very poor operatic conductor at the time; yet the task of leading the students' operatic performances should have been assigned to me. However, during the first year Azanchevski undertook this duty himself, and then entrusted it to Ferrero. The reason he gave for doing so was that Ferrero was supposed to have operatic traditions at his fingers' ends. A brief, somewhat strained interview on this subject with Azanchevski (I believe, in the spring of 1875) led to my resignation as the conductor of the orchestra class. The class was entrusted to K. Y. Davydoff,[1] but the schedule of my theoretical courses was slightly increased, so that my salary of 1000 rubles remained as before. From this period

[1] Karl Davydoff, cellist, composer, and teacher. Born at Goldingen, Kurland, 1838; died at Moscow, 1889. C. V. V.

when I led the orchestra class I have retained one rather pleasant reminiscence—the arranging of a musical evening (in 1873, I think) in memory of deceased Russian composers; it was February 2nd, the anniversary of Glinka's death. The evening was given under my direction, though the initiative belonged to A. I. Rubyets, who had trained the chorus of Conservatory students. For the first time before an audience, the student orchestra played fairly well. We gave, among other things, *A Night in Madrid; The Narrative of the Head* (Act II, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*) ; Introduction to *A Life for the Tsar;* Syeroff's *Hopak;* Dargomyzhski's duet *Dyevitsy Krasavitsy* (Maids of Beauty), sung by a chorus of women's voices. I have a recollection that Dütsch and Lyadoff played instruments of percussion. Both orchestra and chorus acquitted themselves fairly well, and the impression was most favourable. After that, for several years, there was a custom of arranging public concerts of that nature every February 2nd; the next was again directed by me, excerpts from the older Dütsch's *Kroatka* (The Croatian Girl) being on the program. The subsequent annual evenings were directed by others, as I had given up the post of professor in the Orchestra Class. Having left that class, I found myself insufficiently prepared for the work of conducting concerts or opera. If I did, later on, achieve a certain measure of success in conducting and was able safely to lead the concerts of the Free Music School, the Russian Symphony Concerts and even operatic performances, it was due to my subsequent experience with the Naval Bands and the Student Orchestra of the Court Chapel, and again to my constant study of Napravnik's methods, when he produced my operas at the Mariinski Theatre.

CHAPTER XI

1871–73

Illness and death of my brother. Living with Musorgski. Difficulties with the censor about *Pskovityanka.* N. K. Krabbe. Production of *The Stone Guest.* Marriage and trip abroad. Production of *Pskovityanka* and scenes from *Boris Godunoff.* Symphony in C-major. Appointment to the post of Inspector of Musical Bands of the Naval Department. Study of wind instruments.

In the fall of 1871, my brother Voyin Andreyevich's health, which had been shattered for several years by heart disease, grew considerably worse. With his wife and his three children he left for Pisa to spend the autumn and winter there. My mother went to Moscow to see her niece, S. N. Bedryaga. Thus my brother's apartment was vacant all winter, and nothing attracted me to Vasilyevski Ostrov. Musorgski and I agreed to live together, and we took rooms or rather a furnished room in Zaremba's house on Pantyeleymonovskaya Street. This, I imagine, is the only case of two composers living together. How could we help being in each other's way? This is how we managed. Mornings until about noon, Musorgski used the piano, and I did copying or else orchestrated something fully thought out. By noon he would go to his departmental duties, leaving the piano at my disposal. In the evening time was allotted by mutual agreement. Moreover, twice a week, I went to the Conservatory at 9 A. M., while Musorgski frequently dined at the Opochinins; so that things adjusted themselves in the best of fashions. That autumn and winter the two of us accomplished a good deal, with constant exchange of ideas and plans. Musorgski composed and orchestrated the Polish act of *Boris Godunoff* and the folk scene *Near Kromy.* I orchestrated and finished my *Maid of Pskov.* Towards the beginning of October the second tableau of Act III and

the whole of Act IV of *Pskovityanka* were ready; only the overture was to be written.

Early in November the even tenor of our life was interrupted for some time as follows. From Pisa came a telegram with the news of my brother's sudden death. The Navy Department dispatched me with a considerable sum of money to bring his body to St. Petersburg. Hurriedly, I made ready and started for Pisa *via* Vienna, Semmering and Bologna. Several days later my brother's embalmed body was sent on, and I left for St. Petersburg, escorting the family of the deceased. In Vienna we stopped to rest for some two days. At the time Anton Rubinstein was in Vienna conducting a series of symphony concerts. He was preparing to give the first performance of Liszt's recently finished oratorio, *Christus*. I secured Rubinstein's address and went to see him. He received me very cordially and, immediately seating himself at the piano, played me almost the whole oratorio from the advance sheets of the piano score.

After I had returned to St. Petersburg and Voyin Andreyevich had been buried, my life slipped into its old groove, with Musorgski, in Pantyeleymonovskaya Street.

On Sunday afternoons one or another of our acquaintances came to visit us. In passing, let me mention the visit of N. F. Solovyoff, who evidently wished to knit a closer acquaintance. But recently graduated from the Conservatory, he had been close to Syeroff. Upon the latter's death, Solovyoff collaborated with the widow V. S. Syerova to complete *Vrazhya Sila* [1] (The Fiendish Power) from the composer's sketches, and he also orchestrated Act V of the opera. *Vrazhya Sila* was produced at the Mariinski Theatre and scored a considerable success, though less so than *Rognyeda* in its time; but Solovyoff, who had completed this composition, began to attract a measure of public attention. However, no closer relations were entered into, and he did not repeat the visit.

Let me also recall the following episode. One Sunday H. A. Laroche [2] came to see us. At first, conversation ran along safely enough, but V. V. Stasoff, who dropped in by chance, was at our visitor's throat in an instant. V. V. could not stand Laroche

[1] Founded on a play by Ostrovski. C. V. V.
[2] Syeroff's successor on the *Golos*. C. V. V.

V. V. STASOFF *from the painting by* I. Y. RYEPIN

for his ultra-conservatism in music and his views à la Katkoff. Stasoff had shown deep interest in Laroche's first long and splendid article on *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* But in his subsequent articles Laroche (he worked on Katkoff's *Moscow Gazette*) began to express himself more and more as a convinced champion of technical perfection in art; as an apologist of the old Flemings, Palestrina, Bach and Mozart; as an opponent of Beethoven, as a preacher of eclecticism, provided it was accompanied by perfection of technique, and as a foe of "the mighty *koochka* (band)." In view of Laroche's critical articles and their tendencies, his liking for Berlioz's music was queer and incomprehensible,—music so unusual, "disheveled" and, in any event, far from technically perfect. Stasoff's squabble with Laroche was long drawn out and unpleasant. Laroche tried to be restrained and logical; while Stasoff, as usual, took the bit in his teeth and rushed into rudeness, accusations of dishonesty, etc. One could hardly get them to stop.

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In December, 1871 Nadyezhda Nikolayevna Purgold became my betrothed. The wedding was set for the summer, at Pargolovo. Naturally my visits to the Purgolds, rather frequent until then, grew still more frequent; I spent almost every evening with Nadya. Nevertheless my work continued. The overture to *Pskovityanka* was being composed and was completed in orchestral score in January, 1872.

I submitted the libretto to the dramatic censor. The censor Fridberg insisted that certain changes and toning down in expression should be made in the *vyeche* (free city assembly) scene. I had to submit. The words *vyeche, vol'nitsa* (volunteers), *styepyeny posadnik* (actual mayor of a free city), etc. should be replaced with the words: *skhodka* (meeting), *druzhina* (yeomanry), *pskovski namyestnik* (governor of Pskov). From Toocha's song the following lines were stricken out:

> Dented have become our swords,
> And our axes lost their edge.
> Is there nothing left on which
> We may sharpen axe and sword?

At the censor's office I was told that all changes must aim at re-

moving from my libretto the slightest suggestion of the republican form of government in Pskov and the *vyeche* of Act II must be transformed into an ordinary riot. In order to grasp the full bearing of the scene, Fridberg invited Musorgski and myself to his house one evening and made us play and sing him the second act, which he enjoyed in no slight degree. But the principal obstacle was found somewhere else. In the Censorship Bureau there was a document of the 40's, I believe,—an order of H. I. M. Emperor Nicholas I, which stated that rulers antedating the house of the Romanoffs [1] may be represented on the stage in drama and tragedy only, but not in opera. To my inquiry: why? I received the reply: "And suppose the Tsar should suddenly sing a ditty, well, it would be unseemly." At all events, there was His Majesty's Order, not to be disregarded; it was necessary to get by it in a round-about way. In the 70's the Secretary of the Navy was N. K. Krabbe, a courtier, arrogant, a poor seaman, who had reached the post of Secretary by way of adjutant and staff service. A man fond of music and the theatre, and still more so of pretty artists, but kind-hearted at all events. My deceased brother, Voyin Andreyevich, a splendid seaman, an impartial and straightforward man, had always been at daggers drawn with the Secretary of the Navy, in all meetings, councils and committees. They held contrary views on all questions that came up at the Ministry, and Voyin Andreyevich, who heatedly stood up for his opinions, often fought and won against the motions of Krabbe (who strove only to please august personages). Occasionally the reverse happened, and things were done that V. A. thought inadvisable. Be that as it may, official war between Krabbe and V. A. never ceased. On my brother's death, the feeling of respect for the memory of his official enemy strikingly manifested itself in N. K. Krabbe's actions. Of his own accord, he hastened to do everything possible, in order to provide for the family as well as the mother of the deceased. N. K. Krabbe's feelings took me in, as well; and suddenly I became a favourite with him. He sent for me unsolicited and was gracious and amiable; he proposed that I turn to him in all difficulties, and he gave me permission to visit him at any time. The censorship difficulties with *Pskovityanka* made me apply to him, and

[1] 1613. J. A. J.

with the greatest readiness he undertook to solicit, through the Grand Duke Konstantin,[1] the abrogation of the antiquated Imperial Order forbidding the representation, in opera, of persons reigning *before the House of Romanoffs*. Grand Duke Konstantin also took up the matter with a will, and the censor shortly informed me that Tsar Ivan had been permitted to appear on the operatic boards and that the libretto had been licensed by the censor on condition of changes in the matter of the *vyeche*. At the same time my opera was accepted by the Board of Directors of the Imperial Theatres, of which the immediate management, after the dismissals of Gedeonoff and Fyodoroff, lay in the hands of Lukashevich, who was well-disposed towards the members of our circle. However, the supreme though unofficial direction of the theatres devolved at that time upon Baron Kister, Controller of the Ministry of the Court. There was no real director. Napravnik, though not in favour of my opera, had to bow to Lukashevich's influence, and the work was announced for the following season. At any rate, in the matter of its acceptance for a production at the Mariinski Theatre, the intercession of the Grand Duke into censorship affairs, had surely had a considerable effect. I imagine that the reasoning of the Board of Directors of the Theatres was as follows: The Grand Duke himself is interested in Rimsky-Korsakoff's opera—consequently it is impossible not to accept it. Napravnik had become acquainted with *Pskovityanka* one evening at Lukashevich's, where Musorgski and I were invited. Modest, who sang magnificently in every voice, helped me show the opera to advantage before those present. Of course, Napravnik did not express his opinion, but merely praised our clean-cut execution. Generally, the performances of *The Maid of Pskov* with piano accompaniment at Krabbe's and frequently at the Purgold house went as follows: Musorgski sang Tsar Ivan Grozny, Tokmakoff, and other male rôles, according to need; a young physician Vasilyeff (a tenor) sang Matoota and Toocha; A. N. Purgold sang Olga and the nurse; my fiancée played the accompaniment, and I, as emergency demanded, either helped out in the other parts or played four-hands with Nadya whatever was impracticable for two-hands. She, too, made the arrangement of *The Maid of Pskov* for voice

[1] The Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich, brother of Alexander II and, at this time, High Admiral of the Russian Fleet. C. V. V.

and piano. The performances with the above cast were excellent, clear, fiery, and full of style, and took place every time before a considerable gathering of interested listeners.

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In February, 1872, *The Stone Guest,* with my orchestration, was performed at the Mariinski Theatre. I attended all rehearsals. Napravnik was impassive, though his manner was irreproachable. I was content with my orchestration and quite delighted with the opera. The opera was well cast. Kommissarzhevski, the Don Juan; Platonova, the Donna Anna; Pyetroff, the Leporello were all excellent; nor did the others spoil the good impression. The audiences were perplexed, but the opera had success, nevertheless. I do not remember how many performances *The Stone Guest* had; but not many, at any rate. Soon the opera was off the boards and for a long period, too.

The war between Balakireff and the Russian Musical Society was renewed: five subscription concerts of the Free Music School, with interesting programs, were announced. Balakireff worked energetically, but the attendance was insufficient; the funds gave out, and the fifth concert could not take place. The war was lost; Balakireff was crestfallen. In the spring he made a trip to Nizhni-Novgorod and gave a piano recital there, counting on the local interest in him as a native of Nizhni-Novgorod. The hall was empty. Balakireff called this concert "his Sedan"; on returning to St. Petersburg he began to avoid people, even his close friends; he drew back into his shell and for a long time gave up all activity—neither appearing in public nor doing any creative work. A great moral change was going on within him: this utter unbeliever had turned religious mystic and fanatic. During the next few years of complete estrangement from all, he held some clerical position in a freight station of the Warsaw Railroad. Rumour had it that he was mentally unbalanced; this was untrue in any case, as his spiritual reconstruction cannot be considered a derangement in the current sense of the word. It was said that his close associates were now Terti Ivanovich Filippov and a certain "old-faith" [1]

[1] In *A Short History of Russian Music,* Montagu-Nathan writes concerning this sect: "During his regency, Boris Godunoff made an important change in ecclesiastical administration. Hitherto the Russian Church had been governed from Constantinople in consequence of the adoption by Russia of the Byzantine form of Christianity.

priest; and that this latter had enshrouded Balakireff with the rayless gloom of ancient Russia; to that extent the rumour subsequently proved to be fairly correct. Balakireff's moral crisis and estrangement lasted for a long time, and only in the late 70's did he gradually begin to turn back to public and creative activity, but he was already a profoundly changed man. [1]

I spent the beginning of summer at First Pargolovo, where I rented a small room in order to be near the Purgolds and my fiancée. My marriage took place June 30. We were married in the church of Shuvaloff Park. Musorgski was my best man. The wedding took place in the daytime; after dinner at the summer-house of my bride's family we went to St. Petersburg, directly to the Warsaw Depot, escorted by all of our connections; from there we took the train for Switzerland and Northern Italy.

We returned to Russia in mid-August and spent the rest of the summer at Pargolovo; we paid a brief visit, however, to my mother at Tervajoki, as she still lived with my deceased brother's family. Early in autumn, my wife and I took rooms on Shpalyernaya Street.

Meanwhile, at the Mariinski Theatre, rehearsals of *Pskovityanka* began; the arrangement for voice and piano had been published by Bessel in the autumn. Owing to my trip abroad, I had not read the proof of this edition, but had intrusted it to Cui.

Godunoff, desirous of obtaining the support of the Russian clergy, established a Patriarchate at Moscow. To this office Nikon was appointed in 1642. During his tenure, Nikon determined upon making what he considered a very necessary revision in the liturgical books of the Church. These had for generations past been copied by hand, and many inaccuracies had crept into their pages. On the adoption of printing, these inaccuracies were of course invested with sanction. Nikon went to the fountain-head and obtained copies of the Greek originals from Constantinople with the object of making the necessary restoration. Errors had also been made in copying the printed ikons or sacred tokens. Nikon introduced certain reforms in the ritual in reference to the manner of making the sign of the cross, of pronouncing the name of Jesus, and of alluding to the Deity in the Creed. These changes, together with those in the liturgical books, brought about the schism which divided the whole Russian Church. The adherents of the traditional and accepted form of worship called themselves Old Believers. Nothing could more plainly reveal the fanaticism which has entered into the dispute between the two bodies than the surviving rejection of all printed literature which the Old Believers still consider as more likely to contain errors than written versions. By some of the Old Believers, to cross oneself before a painted ikon is characterized as an act of blasphemy. The Orthodox Church had been doing its best for nearly three hundred years to stamp out these non-conforming sects, when, in 1906, Stolypin granted recognition to all religious sects in Russia." C. V. V.

[1] Riva, July 25, 1906.

The edition came out with a multitude of mistakes in both music and text. In the text there were such errors as made it absolutely impossible to guess the sense of some of the word groups; *vanous poeks,* for instance, that actually appeared in the text, was supposed to mean: *various folks,* etc.

As customary, the rehearsals of *The Maid of Pskov* began with the choruses. I attended the choral rehearsals, accompanied the chorus, and later—the soloists, myself. Pyetroff sang Tsar Ivan; Platonova sang Olga; Lyeonova sang the Nurse; Orloff sang Mikhaylo Toocha; Myel'nikoff—Prince Tokmakoff. I. A. Pomazanski and Y. S. Azeyeff, the choir masters, were highly delighted with my opera; Napravnik was impassive and did not express his opinion, but his disapproval made itself felt even against his will. The singers were consicentious and amiable; O. A. Pyetroff was not quite pleased, complaining of the number of long drawn out passages and stage mistakes which it was difficult to overcome in the acting. He was right in many ways, but youth made me fly into a passion; I therefore yielded nothing, would not allow cuts, and naturally and obviously irritated both him and Napravnik exceedingly. After the choral and solo rehearsals, came orchestral rehearsals for weeding out mistakes. Napravnik worked magnificently, pouncing upon all errors of the copyists as well as my own slips of the pen. The recitatives he led in (normal) time, and that angered me greatly. Only later did I grasp that he had been right and that my recitatives had been written inconveniently for free and unconstrained declamation, as they were over-burdened with various orchestral figures. The music of Matoota's attack on Toocha and Olga had to be lightened somewhat by changing certain orchestral figures to more practicable ones. The same thing had to be done in the scene of Matoota's visit to the Tsar. The flutist Klosé, who had struggled to blow a lengthy legato figure without rests on the piccolo flute, finally dropped it, as his breath had given out; I was obliged to insert rests for breathing. But save for such trifling shortcomings, all went satisfactorily. The singers had considerable difficulty with the 5/4 duet in Act IV, Napravnik, too, frowned, but found a way out. Finally stage rehearsals commenced; here, in putting on the *vyeche* scene the stage managers G. P. Kondratyeff and A. Y. Morozoff showed great zeal: they dressed in costume and took part in the mass

movements, both at rehearsals and in the early performances of the opera, like any member of the cast.

The première took place January 1, 1873. The performance was fine; the artists gave of their best. Orloff sang magnificently in the *vyeche* scene, leading off the chorus of the free city volunteers with splendid effect. Pyetroff, Lyeonova, Platonova, as well as chorus and orchestra were good. The opera met with favour, especially the Second Act; I was called out many times. During the course of that season *Pskovityanka* was sung ten times to full houses and great applause. I was pleased, though the press, with the exception of Cui, belaboured me soundly. With others, Solovyoff found in the piano score of *Pskovityanka* an incorrectly represented tremolo (one of the numerous misprints in that edition); evidently alluding to my professorship at the Conservatory, he venomously advised me to "go to school, and repeat and go to school." Rappoport said that I "had profoundly studied the secrets of harmony" (at the time I had not studied them at all); but then followed a multitude of all sorts of "buts" proving my opera worthless. Nor did Fyeofil Tolstoy (Rostislav), Laroche, and Famintsyn pat my work on the back. Famintsyn laid especial stress on the dedication of my opera "to the music circle dear to me"; and from this he drew most extraordinary conclusions. On the other hand, the scene of the Pskov *vol'nitsa* (commonwealth volunteers) struck the fancy of the young students, who were bawling the song of the *vol'nitsa* to their hearts' content, up and down the corridors of the Academy.

The Russian Opera, however, under Lukashevich's supreme direction, did not confine itself that season to the production of *The Maid of Pskov*. Towards the end of the theatre season were put on, at some one's benefit performance, two scenes of *Boris Godunoff*: the Inn scene and the scene At the Fountain. Pyetroff was magnificent as Varlaam; Platonova, as Marina and Kommisarzhevski, as Dmitri, were also fine. The scenes scored a great hit. Musorgski and all of us were in raptures, and it was proposed to give *Boris Godunoff* in its entirety the following season. After the above performance, Musorgski, Stasoff, Alyeksandra Nikolayevna (my wife's sister who had married N. P. Molas [1] in

[1] Molas was a naval officer. As Admiral of the Russian Fleet, he went down in the flagship, *Pyetropavlovsk,* at the entrance of the harbour of Port Arthur during the Russo-Japanese war. C. V. V.

the fall of 1872) and other people who stood close to our musical activity, came together at our house. At supper, champagne was drunk with wishes for the early performance and success of *Boris*.

My wife and her sister, Mme. A. N. Molas, two formerly active participants in all the musical gatherings at the house of Vladimir Fyodorovich Purgold, were already like "slices off the loaf" and no longer in the counting. Still the musical gatherings that had taken place at V. F.'s house for so many years, did not cease during the autumn preceding the production of *Pskovityanka* and the scenes from *Boris;* both *The Stone Guest* and *Boris Godunoff,* in its entirety, as well as *Pskovityanka* were sung there with the same cast.

At our house, also, Musorgski, Borodin and Stasoff met very frequently. At that time Musorgski's thoughts had already turned toward *Khovanshchina.* I began writing a Symphony in C-major; for its Scherzo I took the E flat major Scherzo in 5/4 time, which I had in my portfolio and the trio of which I had composed aboard some steamer on one of the Italian lakes during my honeymoon abroad. Work on the first movement of the Symphony was slow, however, and beset with difficulties; I strove to crowd in as much counterpoint as possible; but being unskilled in it and hard put to combine the themes and motives, I drained my immediate flow of imagination considerably. The cause of this was, of course, my insufficient technique; yet I was irresistibly drawn to add greater interest to the structural style of my compositions. A similar fate befell the third movement of the Symphony—Andante. The Finale presented somewhat less difficulty; but the combination of several subjects at its end proved another stumbling block. Nevertheless, the sketch of the Symphony was ready in the spring, and, from the rough draft, we tried it out on the piano at our gatherings.

What Borodin was composing at that time, I do not remember; most likely he recklessly divided his energies between *Prince Igor* and the Second Symphony in B-minor, which was still a long way from completion. Cui was once more thinking of a new opera and was composing many songs, of which *Meniscus* was dedicated to me and *Iz vod podymaya golovku* (Lifting the little head from the waters)—to my wife. Of those, who were, so to speak, outsiders in our intimate circle, Platonova, Paskhaloff, the architect

Hartman, and N. V. Galkin visited us that year. I remember as if it were today that on one occasion Galkin, who had come to see us, helped us to make tea, as our only maid had suddenly left that day. With our combined efforts we tried to make the *samovar* work and Galkin fanned the charcoal with a boot-leg. Paskhaloff, who had come from Moscow as a newly discovered genius, played us excerpts from his opera *A Grand Rout at Satan's Court,* as well as a would-be orchestral fantasy in the nature of a dance. All this music was immature and in reality gave but slight promise. Paskhaloff soon vanished from the horizon; he began to drink, composed commonplace songs to make money, and died an early death, leaving nothing remarkable in the way of compositions.[1] I also recall that one morning, a friend of my wife's, one Mayeff, I think, brought to our house a boy who had obvious musical talent and played the piano charmingly; Mayeff and I were to decide together, whether the boy should be sent to the Conservatory. The answer was in the affirmative. That boy was E. A. Krushevski, subsequently my pupil in the class of composition, later an accompanist, and finally second conductor of the Russian Opera.

During the season of 1872–73, Balakireff remained out of sight, as he had entirely withdrawn from music and from all people who had formerly been close to him. The Free Music School no longer showed many signs of life; from time to time classes of some sort as well as choir-drilling went on under Pomazanski's direction, but the Director himself was never seen, and there was no talk of concerts. The life of the School was ebbing slowly but surely.

In the spring of 1873, the Director of the Chancellery of the Navy Department, K. A. Mann, at a hint from N. K. Krabbe, summoned me and told me that there had been established a new post of Inspector of Music Bands of the Navy Department; that I had been chosen for the post; that a complement of musician pupils was being organized, as holders of Navy Department fellowships at the St. Petersburg Conservatory; and that their immediate supervision was entrusted to me. My duties included

[1] V. N. Paskhaloff (1841–1885) composed many songs, of which *Dityatko, milost' Gospoduya s toboyu* (Baby mine, the Lord's mercy be with you!) is one of the most popular songs in Russia. J. A. J.

the inspecting of all Navy Department Music Bands throughout Russia; thus I was to supervise the band-masters and their appointments, the repertory, the quality of the instruments, etc.; I was also to write a program of studies for the newly appointed fellows, and to act as intermediary between the Navy Department and the Conservatory. In May, the order affecting me was issued. I was appointed to the new post with civilian rank, and I parted with delight with both my military status and officer's uniform. The post took care of me rather well financially, and I was on the roster of the Chancellery of the Naval Department. Henceforth, I was a musician officially and incontestably. I was in ecstasy; so were my friends. Congratulations were showered on me. The dear V. V. Stasoff delightedly prophesied that some day I would be Director of the Court Chapel, and he would on that occasion drink his beloved yellow tea in my apartment near the Chapel Bridge. Under such circumstances the summer of 1873 came, and my wife and I moved to a summerhouse in First Pargolovo. [1]

My appointment to the post of Inspector of Music Bands stirred up a desire of long standing in me, to familiarize myself thoroughly with the construction and technique of orchestral instruments. I obtained some of these: a trombone, a clarinet, a flute, etc. and, with the aid of tables existing for that purpose, set out to find out their fingering. At our summer home in Pargolovo I played these instruments, so to speak, for all the neighbours to hear. I had no aptitude for brass instruments; the high notes I produced only with difficulty; to acquire a technique on the wood-winds I lacked patience; yet I became rather thoroughly acquainted with them after all. With the peculiar haste of youth and a certain rashness in the matter of self-instruction, I immediately conceived the idea of setting out to write the fullest possible text-book of instrumentation; and, with this end in view, I made various outlines, memoranda and drawings which had reference to a detailed explanation of the technique of the instruments. I was eager to tell the world no less than *all* on this score. The writing of such a manual or rather the outlines of such sketches for it, took a great deal of my time throughout the following season of 1873–74. After having read a little in Tyndall and

[1] Written in Yalta, July 20, 1893.

Helmholtz, I wrote an introduction for my book; in this I endeavoured to state the acoustic laws pertaining to the fundamentals of musical instruments. My work was to begin with exhaustive monographs of the instruments by groups, with cuts and tables, with description of all makes in use to date. I had not as yet thought of Part II of my book, which was to treat of combinations of instruments. But soon I realized that I had gone too far. The wood-winds, in particular, proved to include untold multitudes of makes; in reality each maker or each factory has an individual system. By adding an extra valve or key, the maker either adds a new trill on his instrument or makes easier some run that presents difficulties on instruments of other makes. There was absolutely no possibility of finding one's way through all this maze. In the group of brass wind-instruments I found some with three, four and five valves; the construction of these valves is not always the same on the instruments of the various firms. To describe all this was absolutely beyond my power; and of what use would it be to any one reading my text-book? All these minute descriptions of all possible makes, of their advantages and disadvantages would but thoroughly confuse one who wished to learn something. Naturally, the question arising in his mind would be: which instrument, then, should I write for? What is possible and what is impracticable? And in the end he would fling my bulky text-book violently to perdition. Such reflections gradually cooled my zeal for my work, and, after struggling a year with it, I gave it up. But in return, I personally had amassed considerable information on the subject by constantly checking myself up in the music bands of the Naval Department, in a practical way, and in the work over my text-book, in a theoretical way. I had learned what every practical musician (a German military bandmaster, for example) knows, but what, unfortunately, artist-composers do not know at all. I understand the basic principle of convenient and inconvenient passages; the difference between virtuoso difficulties and impracticability; I came to know all the uttermost tones of all instruments and the secret of producing some notes which everybody avoids through ignorance. I came to see that all I had known of wind-instruments was wrong and false; and from now on I began to apply this newly acquired

information in my compositions, as well as to strive to impart it to my Conservatory pupils and give them at least a clear conception, if not a full knowledge, of instruments of the orchestra. During the summer of 1873, I was occupied with practical study of wind-instruments; with sketching the text-book that was never written; with polishing and orchestrating my Third Symphony, and with trips to Cronstadt and St. Petersburg for the purposes of acquainting myself with the bands prior to taking up my duties as Inspector. In the bands of musicians I was met as superiors are met: stand to front! I made them play their repertory in my presence; caught the wrong notes; detected the slips (and there were very many of them) in the instrumental parts; examined the instruments and made requisitions for new or additional ones, according to what was necessary. The authorities, who had jurisdiction over the music bands, were amiable to me; but occasionally I grew rather peppery and humiliated some bandmasters undeservedly or ridiculed pieces which I did not like, though the performance of these was necessary and unavoidable in military bands. Thus matters went on until autumn.

In August we moved to the city, to a new apartment, in Kononoff's house, on Furshtadtskaya Street. On August 20th our son Misha was born.

CHAPTER XII

1873–75

Début as Conductor. Musorgski. His *Khovanshchina* and *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka* (The Fair at Sorochintsy). Operatic prize contest. Trip to Nikolayeff and the Crimea. Studying harmony and counterpoint. Directorship of Free Music School.

In the season of 1873–74 the Samara Government suffered famine owing to poor crops. I do not remember who conceived the idea of arranging a symphony concert at the Club of the Nobility, for the benefit of the sufferers. I was invited to organize and conduct the musical part of the program. By agreement with A. I. Rubyets, ever responsive to any worthy undertaking, I secured the promise that he would train a large amateur choir for this concert. We began to prepare for it. In addition to my Third Symphony, which was entirely finished by then, the concert program included Maria's *romanza* from *Ratcliff,* Holofernes's March from Syeroff's *Judith,* Musorgski's chorus, *The Rout of Sennacherib,* A. Rubinstein's Concerto in D-minor, etc. Rubyets drilled the choruses; I came to purely vocal rehearsals to accompany and conduct. The thought of public appearance as conductor at a grand concert made me nervous in the extreme; for a whole month (before the concert) I could think of nothing else. I scanned the scores and went through the motions of conducting them while sitting in my study. For my début before the orchestra, I selected my new Symphony, to be able to act with the greatest authority through appearing in the double capacity of conductor and composer. My nervousness before the orchestral rehearsals had reached its height, but I managed to master myself and "acted" like an old hand. The musicians were conscientious, and I strove not to burden them with polishing up details, especially in numbers familiar to them. In fact, advice like the following was volunteered: "Be a little stricter with us, orchestra

musicians like strictness," etc. But how can one be strict with an orchestra imbued with *esprit de corps* and bound by no responsibility to a strange conductor, an outsider! However, all went well, we found our way through the Symphony, and the 5/4 Scherzo unfolded well enough. Mention must be made that I examined the orchestral parts and corrected them betimes; else, at the first misunderstanding, I should have lost my head and made a fiasco in the eyes of the musicians. After my Symphony, I took up numbers by other composers, Glinka's *Jota Aragonesa* and the March from Syeroff's *Judith.* In the next rehearsal the choruses participated as well. The chorus *The Rout of Sennacherib* was performed partly with my orchestration. Musorgski had composed for it a new trio, which greatly delighted Stasoff, and, owing to lack of leisure, had entrusted its instrumentation to me.

The Concert for the benefit of the famine-striken population of Samara occurred on February 18th. M. D. Kamyenskaya and the pianist Hartvigson (who was dissatisfied with my orchestral accompaniment) were the soloists. I was somewhat languid after the preceding excitement; nevertheless everything went off safely. However, we did not feed the hunger-ridden Samarans, as our audience was very small and we hardly covered the expenses of orchestra, lighting, etc. Thus passed my début as orchestral conductor. By the way, let me mention that before the concert began I received from Balakireff a very warm letter written in the spirit of benediction and wishing me success. Personally, however, he attended neither the rehearsals nor the concert, and my Symphony remained unknown to him.

This Symphony pleased my musical friends only moderately. Save for the Scherzo, it was found somewhat dry; my leaning toward counterpoint was disapproved, and even its orchestration appeared most ordinary to many, V. V. Stasoff for instance. Apparently the Symphony pleased only Borodin; yet he said that in it I appeared to him as a professor who had put on spectacles and composed *Eine grosse Symphonie in C,* as befitted his rank.

During the season described I often visited Borodin, and brought along the wind-instruments I owned, for us both to study and dally with. It turned out that Borodin played the flute quite dexterously, and, with his finger-technique on this instrument, he

easily adapted himself to playing the clarinet as well. As for the brass instruments, their high notes he produced with extraordinary ease. We had long talks about the orchestra and the freer use of brass instruments, as opposed to our former practices, borrowed from Balakireff. The result of these talks and our enthusiasm, however, was an excessive use of the brass group in Borodin's Second Symphony in B-minor, which he was then orchestrating.

On my visits of inspection to the music bands I had charge of, especially the band of the port of Cronstadt, that of the Company of the Guards and of the Naval School, with full complements of brass and wood-winds,—I was led to orchestrate for military bands and provide them from time to time with pieces of my own arrangement. During that year, and in several years following, I made arrangements of the *Coronation March* from *Le Prophète,* the Finale from *A Life for the Tsar;* Isabelle's aria from *Robert le Diable* (for clarinet solo); Berlioz's *Marche Marocaine;* F. Schubert's *March* in B-minor; Introduction to *Lohengrin;* the grand scene of the Conspiracy from *Les Huguenots;* the Nocturne and March from *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* etc. Where all these scores are now it is hard to say; but they can probably be found among the dust-covered old music of the bands of the Naval Department. In addition to my works of this nature, I asked leaders of the bands in my charge to make arrangements of pieces selected by me. Occasionally I was rather exacting towards band leaders and I even dismissed one poor old man, because some musicians in his band played the bass-tubas "in the wrong way" and thereby systematically introduced false notes into the pieces they played. Holders of Naval Department fellowships who graduated from the Conservatory, I assigned to bands at my own discretion, paying no heed to requests or pressure from the Naval authorities; thereby I aroused considerable dissatisfaction. I am glad, however, that while holding the post of Inspector, I succeeded in placing, in the Naval Department's bands, two Russian bandmasters—M. Chernoff and I. Koolygin—from among the Conservatory Fellows, whereas before my time the leaders had been exclusively foreigners hired for the purpose.

On January 24, 1874, *Boris Godunoff* was produced with great success at the Mariinski Theatre. We all were jubilant. Musorgski was already at work on *Khovanshchina.* Its original plan was

much broader and abounded in numerous details which never got into the final version. For instance, there had been projected a whole tableau in the German suburb, where Emma and her father, the pastor, were to be the dramatis personae. Musorgski even played us musical sketches of this scene in quasi-Mozartean style (!), because of the German bourgeois surroundings of that scene. By the way, there was most charming music in this scene. Likewise, a scene of a lottery, which is said to have been first introduced in our country during the Khovanshchina epoch, was projected. Subsequently the music composed for this scene, became the C-major chorus at the entrance of Prince Ivan Khovanski in Act I. The princes' quarrels in Act II were too long and too obscure in their wording. Mother Susanna had at first played a pretty important rôle in *Khovanshchina,* taking part as she did in the religious dispute with Dosifey. In the present version she is an unnecessary character, quite forced and useless to all intents and purposes. In Act I there had been a rather longish scene, in which the people demolished the court-scrivener's booth. Subsequently, after the composer's death, when preparing the opera for publication, I cut out this scene, as extremely unmusical and causing the action to drag. Of the excerpts that Musorgki played for our company of friends, we all were particularly taken by the Persian Girls' dance, which he played magnificently; but in *Khovanshchina* it had been dragged in "by the hair," so to speak, as the only pretext for introducing it there was the possibility that among the old Prince Khovanski's concubines there were, or could have been, Persian slave girls. Everybody liked, too, the court-scrivener's scene in Act I. The melody of Marfa the schismatic's song Musorgski had obtained, I believe, from I. F. Gorboonoff, with whom he had picked up an acquaintance in those days. The choral song of glorification of Prince Khovanski (G-major) and Andrey's song (G sharp minor) in Act V are of extremely doubtful originality, with unusually queer intervals in perfect fifths; and these also he had recorded as heard from some one among his acquaintances. The melodies of Marfa's songs and of the glorification (wedding song) with their original text I incorporated, with Musorgski's permission, in my collection of 100 Russian songs. Of the *Khovanshchina* excerpts then played mention must be made as well of the barbarous music of empty perfect fourths,

M. P. MUSORGSKI *from the painting by* I. Y. Ryepin

which was intended for the chorus of schismatics and which infinitely delighted V. V. Stasoff. Fortunately, Musorgski later somewhat changed his first idea, and the perfect fourths remained only here and there, as odds and ends of his former sketch in the beautiful chorus of schismatics in the Phrygian mode in D (last act of the opera).

None of us knew the real subject and plan of *Khovanshchina,* and from Musorgski's accounts, flowery, affected and involved (as was his style of expression then) it was hard to grasp its subject as something whole and consecutive. In general, since the production of *Boris Godunoff,* Musorgski appeared in our midst less frequently, and a marked change was to be observed in him: a certain mysteriousness, nay even haughtiness, if you like, became apparent. His self-conceit grew enormously, and his obscure, involved manner of expressing himself (which had been characteristic even before) now increased enormously. It was often impossible to understand those of his stories, discussions, and sallies which laid claim to wit. This is approximately the period when he fell to loitering at the Maly Yaroslavyets and other restaurants until early morning over cognac, alone or with companions then unknown to us. When he dined with us or with other mutual friends, Musorgski usually definitely refused wine, but hardly had night come, when something at once drew him to the Maly Yaroslavyets. Subsequently, one of his boon-companions of the period, a certain V-ki, whom I had known from Tervajoki, told us that in the lingo of their set there existed a special term "to trans-cognac oneself," and this they applied in practice. With the production of *Boris* the gradual decadence of its highly gifted author had begun. Flashes of powerful creativeness continued for a long time, but his mental logic was growing dim, slowly and gradually. After his retirement from service, after he had become a composer by profession, Musorgski composed more slowly, by fits and starts, lost the connection between separate moments and jumped from one subject to another. Soon he conceived another opera *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka* (The Fair at Sorochintsy), after Gogol. It was composed in a rather queer way. Its first Act and its last Act had no real scenario or text, save musical fragments and characterizations. For the market scene he utilized the music from *Mlada* which was of similar purport. He composed and wrote the songs of Parasya and

Khivrya as well as the happily turned declamatory scene between Khivrya and Afanasi Ivanovich. But between Acts II and III there was projected (for reasons unknown) a fantastic Intermezzo *The Dream of a Peasant Lad,* for which the music came from *A Night on Bald Mount* or *St. John's Eve* (cf. Chapter VII, 1866–67). With some additions and changes, this music had done duty, in its time, for the scene of *Chernobog* (Black God) in *Mlada.* Now, with the addition of a little picture of early dawn, it was to form the projected stage-intermezzo, forcibly squeezed into *The Fair at Sorochintsy.* I vividly recall Musorgski playing us this music; and there was a pedal of interminable length on the note C sharp, to play which was the task of V. V. Stasoff, who took great delight in its endlessness. When Musorgski subsequently wrote this Intermezzo in the form of a sketch for piano and voices he did away with this interminable pedal, to Stasoff's profound sorrow; but it could never be restored, owing to the composer's death. The melodic phrases appearing toward the conclusion of this Intermezzo,—as it were the burden of a distant song (clarinet solo on high notes in *A Night on Bald Mount,* in my arrangement) belonged, in Musorgski's first version, to the characterization of the peasant-lad who sees the dream, and those phrases were to appear as "leading motives" in the opera itself. The demon language from the *Mlada* libretto was to supply the text of this Intermezzo, too. An orchestral prelude, *A Sultry Day in Okraina,* opened the opera *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka.* Musorgski himself composed and orchestrated this prelude, and its score is still in my possession. [1] The work of composing *Khovanshchina* and *The Fair at Sorochintsy* extended over many years; the composer's death on March 16, 1881, left both operas unfinished.

What was the cause of Musorgski's spiritual and mental decay? To a considerable degree it was due at first to the success of *Boris* (owing to which his pride and ambition as author began to grow); later on it was due to its failure. Presently cuts were made in the opera, the splendid scene *Near Kromy* was omitted. Some two years later, the Lord knows why, productions of the opera ceased altogether, although it had enjoyed uninterrupted success, and the performances by Pyetroff and, after his death, by F. I. Stravin-

[1] At the present writing, arranged and orchestrated by A. K. Lyadoff.

ski,[1] Platonova and Kommissarzhevski had been excellent. There were rumours afloat that the opera had displeased the Imperial family; there was gossip that its subject was unplesant to the censors; the result was—the opera was stricken from repertory. On the one hand, V. V. Stasoff's delight in Musorgski's brilliant flashes of creative genius and improvisations had raised Musorgski's self-conceit; on the other hand, the adulation of people incomparably inferior to the author, yet his boon-companions, and the approval on the part of others who admired his virtuosity, though they were unable to distinguish between its true flashes and its felicitous talent for playing pranks,—still pleased and irritated his vanity. Even the bar-man at the restaurant knew *Boris* and *Khovanshchina* well-nigh by heart and honoured Musorgski's genius. Yet the Russian Musical Society denied him recognition; at the opera he had actually been betrayed, though on the surface he was still being treated with affability. His friends and companions, Borodin, Cui and I, still loved him as before and admired whatever was good in his compositions, but we took critical measure of much else of his. The press, led by Laroche, Rostislav and the rest of them, scolded him continually. Under these circumstances, his craving for cognac and desire to lounge in taverns till the small hours grew stronger day by day. To "trans-cognac oneself" was a mere nothing to his pals; but, to his morbidly nervous temperament, it was downright poison. Though still keeping up friendly relations with Cui and Borodin as well as with me, Musorgski regarded me with a certain suspicion. My studies in harmony and counterpoint which had begun to absorb me, did not please him at all. It looked as though he suspected me of being the conservative professor, who might convict him of parallel fifths, and this was unbearable to him. As for the Conservatory, he could not endure it at all. His relations with Balakireff had been rather cool for some time. Balakireff, who now no longer appeared on our horizon, used to say even in the old days that Modest had great talent but "feeble brains," had suspected him of a fondness for wine, and had estranged him even then by saying so.

The year 1874 may be considered the beginning of Musorgski's decay, which was gradual and continued to the day of his death.

[1] Father of Igor Stravinski, the composer. C. V. V.

I have thus far touched in general terms upon the whole last period of Musorgski's activity. The details and ups and downs of the subsequent period of his life, as I know it, I shall describe as I go along in the further course of my reminiscences.

During the seasons of 1872–73 and 1873–74 my wife did not give up piano playing and took an active part at all our gatherings as both accompanist and performer. Her performances of Chopin's Scherzo in B-minor, Schumann's Allegro and many other numbers, as well as her sister's singing, gave great pleasure to all of us. N. V. Galkin, who dropped in from time to time, played violin sonatas with my wife. I have a recollection that once, that year, I played at Cui's the 5/4 Scherzo of my Third Symphony, arranged for four-hands with Hans von Bülow (then giving concerts at the capital), and that he liked it very much. That very day Cui showed him what he had composed for his *Angelo,*[1] and the two played four-hands the Introduction to the opera.

Among the episodes of 1873–74 also belongs the prize competition for an opera on the subject of Gogol's *Christmas Eve,* libretto by Polonski. The competition had been announced long before and now the date was approaching, set by the Board of Directors of the Russian Musical Society, for submitting the operas. I was invited to join the committee of judges who were Nikolay G. Rubinstein, Napravnik, Azanchevski and others, with Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich as chairman. The submitted operas were distributed to us for examination at our leisure. Two of them proved to show merit. But when the committee met at the Grand Duke's palace, it was openly said that one of the operas was Chaykovski's. How this became known before the seals of the envelopes had been broken—I don't remember; but the prize was awarded to him unanimously. True, his opera undoubtedly was the best submitted, so that no harm came from the improper management of the competition, but this does not improve the situation. Napravnik and N. G. Rubinstein played Chaykovski's opera for the Grand Duke four-hands. Everybody was enraptured with the music beforehand, knowing that it was Chaykovski's.

The other opera (whether it was awarded honourable mention

[1] Based on Victor Hugo's play. Ponchielli used the same subject for his opera, *La Gioconda.* C. V. V.

or the second prize [1]—I don't recall) proved to be from the pen of Solovyoff. That was surprising. I had actually found some of its music to my liking, when I examined the piano score.

In the spring of 1874 I was commissioned to spend the summer at Nikolayeff for the purpose of transforming the local port brass band into a mixed band with wood-wind instruments. I was delighted with this commission, and when the Conservatory examinations were over, my wife, little Misha and I repaired to Nikolayeff.

On our arrival in Nikolayeff, the local authorities met us warmly and installed us in one of the wings of the so-called palace on a high bank of the Ingul River. After meeting the families of our superiors—the Nyebol'sins and the Kaznakoffs—we visited them frequently, occasionally making joint excursions with them to Spask, Lyeski, etc.

Soon after my arrival I took up the task of transforming the port band. New instruments were sent for, several new musicians were engaged,—while others were learning instruments anew or adjusting themselves generally to the new make-up of the band. I supervised all rehearsing personally and even conducted many selections myself. Soon the band, with its new personnel, began to appear in public, playing on the boulevard in the evening. Early in July, my wife, Misha and I went to Syevastopol by steamer. We took in the sights of the environs and Bakhchisaray, and went from there overland to the Southern Coast, via the Baydarski Gate. Here we visited Aloopka, Oryeanda and Yalta, and returned to Nikolayeff by steamer. The southern coast of Crimea we liked exceedingly, even though we had but a flitting and superficial view of it. As for Bakhchisaray with its extraordinarily long street, its shops, its coffee houses, the shouts of its venders, the

[1] According to Rosa Newmarch, both the first and second prizes were awarded to Chaykovski. The first title of this opera was *Vakoola the Smith.* Under this title it was produced at St. Petersburg in 1876. The revised version known as *Cherevichki,* was produced at Moscow in 1886. This opera is known by still a third title, *Oksana's Caprice.* The Russian Opera Company which gave a brief season of Russian works at the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York in May, 1922, produced this work, under the title of *Cherevichki,* on Friday evening, May 26, and repeated it on the last night of the season, May 27. I heard one of these extremely inadequate performances, but even under the adverse conditions governing this hearing, I found the Opera extremely humorous, delightful, and fantastic. *Christmas Eve* is one of the tales in Gogol's fantastic *Stories of Mirgorod.* Using Gogol's title, Rimsky-Korsakoff later wrote an opera on the same subject. C. V. V.

chanting of the muezzins on the minarets, the services in the mosques and the oriental music,—it all made the oddest impression on us. It was while hearing the gipsy-musicians of Bakhchisaray that I first became acquainted with oriental music in its natural state, so to speak, and I believe I caught the main features of its character. By the way, I was particularly struck by the quasi-incidental beats of the big drum, in false time, which produced a marvellous effect. In those days the streets of Bakhchisaray, from morning till night rang with music, which oriental nations so love. In front of every coffee house there was continual playing and singing. On our next visit (seven years later), there was no longer a trace of this left: the addle-brained authorities had decided that music meant disorder, and banished the gipsy-musicians from Bakhchisaray to somewhere beyond Chufut-Kale. During my first visit, Bakhchisaray had no hotels either of European or of Russian style, and we lodged at a *mullah's* opposite the Khan's Palace with its famous "Fountain of Tears."

On returning to Nikolayeff, I continued to teach the bands for some time. In August we left Nikolayeff, returned to St. Petersburg, and once more spent a few weeks at V. F. Purgold's summer home in First Pargolovo.

During the ensuing season I came to be more and more absorbed in studying harmony and counterpoint, both of which I had taken up the season before. Steeped in Cherubini and Bellermann, equipped with a few text-books of harmony (Chaykovski's among them) and every imaginable sort of chorale books, I toiled assiduously, beginning with the most elementary exercises. I sat down so poorly informed that I found myself acquiring systematic knowledge even in elementary theory. Many and various exercises in harmony did I do, harmonizing figured bass at first, then melodies and chorales. Counterpoint I studied from Cherubini (in perfect major and minor) and from Bellermann, in ecclesiastical modes. However, I lost patience and undertook to write a string quartet in F-major, before I had acquired anything like the proper training. I composed it rapidly and applied too much counterpoint in the form of continual fugatos (which usually begin to be wearisome in the end). But in the Finale I succeeded in creating one contrapuntal trick: the melodic pairs which form the first subject in the double canon, come in subsequently in the Stretto

without any change whatever and form a double canon once more. One cannot always hit on such a trick, but I managed to get through fairly well. As subject of the Andante I took the melody of the pagan nuptials from my music for Gedeonoff's *Mlada*. My quartet was played at one of the Russian Musical Society's performances by Auer, Pikkel, Veykman, and Davydoff. I did not attend. I recall that I felt somewhat ashamed of my quartet. On the one hand, I had not been accustomed to the rôle of the contrapuntist who writes fugatos,—a rôle considered somewhat disgraceful in our coterie; on the other hand, I could not help feeling that in that quartet I really was not myself. And this happened, because the technique had not yet entered my flesh and blood, and it was still too early for me to write counterpoint and retain my own individuality without imagining myself Bach or some one else. I was told that Anton Rubinstein, who had heard my quartet performed, expressed himself to the effect that now it would seem that I might amount to something. Of course, I smiled scornfully when this was related to me.

My friends who had shown little enthusiasm for my Third Symphony were still less satisfied with my quartet. Nor did my début as conductor send anybody into ecstasies; they began, indeed, to look upon me with a certain pity as one on the downward path. Besides, my studies of harmony and counterpoint made me a suspect in the artistic sense. Nevertheless, having tried my hand at the quartet, I continued my studies. Of course, there was absolutely nothing heroic in that; it was simply that counterpoint and fugue absorbed me altogether. I played and scanned Bach a great deal and came to honour his genius very highly; yet in earlier days, without a proper acquaintance with Bach, but merely repeating Balakireff's words, I used to call him a "composing machine" and his works "maids of beauty, frozen and soulless," if I happened to be in a favourable and peaceful mood. I did not understand then, that counterpoint had been the poetic language of that composer of genius; that it was just as ill-judged to reproach him with his use of counterpoint as to upbraid a poet for using verse and rhyme (which, as it were, embarrass him) instead of employing free and easy prose. I had no idea of the historical evolution of the civilized world's music and had not realized that all modern music owed everything to Bach. Palestrina and the

Flemings too, began to lure me. Then it was that I saw how foolish it was of Berlioz to say that Palestrina was only a series of chords, a bit of nonsense often repeated in our coterie. How strange it is! Stasoff had once been an ardent worshipper of Bach; he had even been nicknamed "Bach" owing to this worship. He had also known and admired his Palestrina and the other old Italians. Later, however, owing to the lure of iconoclasm and quest of new shores, he had sent all that to perdition. Of Bach he now would say that "Bach is beginning *to grind flour*" whenever in his fugues the contrapuntal voices began to flow freely. With gusto it used to be related how Borozdin, a friend of Balakireff, would dance Bach's A-minor organ fugue; he would first lead off with one foot; with the entrance of the second voice he would brandish one hand, with the third voice the other foot, etc; and he would wind up like a mill toward the end. Possibly it was even witty: for a jest one never spares one's own father. But during my study of Bach and Palestrina all this became repugnant to me; the figures of these men of genius appeared majestic, and as though staring with contempt upon our "advanced" frenzy of obscurantism.

Parallel with my study of counterpoint and my contrapuntal period, I came upon other work new to me, as follows:

In the autumn of 1874, a deputation of amateur members of the Free Music School came to ask me to become director of that institution, vice Balakireff who had resigned. What had led to his resignation—I know but little,—but I heard that it had come as the result of insistent demands on the part of some members of the School. Though retired from the world of music, Balakireff had not given up his post as Director, nor did he come to the School; and so the School was wasting away, dragging on a wretched existence. Knowing no details whatever of Balakireff's resignation, I accepted the deputation's proposal and began work at the School which still had its quarters in the Hall of the Town Council. We announced in the papers details regarding the admission of pupils and choral rehearsals; a large chorus was the result. I divided the multitude of members into two classes: the lower class was taught elementary theory and solfeggio; the advanced class studied choral pieces and practised for the public concert. I personally conducted the rehearsals of the upper

class twice a week, and accompanied them on the piano myself. The treasury had little money: its only regular income consisted of the 500 rubles per annum granted by its Most August Patron, the Tsarevich. I began to rehearse excerpts from Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion,* the vocal parts of which were in the School library. We also rehearsed a *Kyrie* of Palestrina's. The choir was large and the amateurs sang with pleasure, while I myself found the work was in full agreement with the contrapuntal mood I was then in. Our intention was to give the concert after a single orchestral rehearsal, as the funds in the treasury were low, and we wanted to realize as much as possible. For the orchestral number I selected Haydn's well-known D-major Symphony. The excerpts of *Passionsmusik* were to be given in Robert Franz's [1] arrangement for a modern orchestra. The concert took place in the City Hall on March 27, 1875, after three years of the silence of the tomb on the part of the Free School, ruined by rivalry between Balakireff's ambition and the Russian Musical Society, which was so hateful to him. The program of the concert was as follows: I. Excerpts from the Oratorio *Israel in Egypt*—Handel; II. *Miserere*—Allegri; III. *Symphony in D-major*—Haydn; IV. *Kyrie*—Palestrina; V. Excerpts from the Oratorio *Passionsmusik*—Bach.

One of the music critics (Famintsyn, I think) observed that Joseph Haydn was the *youngest* composer on the program of this concert!

At the rehearsal of the concert I displayed sufficient executive ability with regard to the chorus; I was circumspect with the orchestra, and all passed off safely. At the concert the hall was full, and the box office receipts good. The audience was pleased, and the School's financial affairs began to improve. My "classic" program astounded absolutely everybody; nobody had expected a program like that from me, and my reputation took a decided fall in the eyes of many. I had chosen such a program first, because we had no money, and the concert had to be given with a single rehearsal, which meant the selection of numbers easy for the orchestra to perform. Secondly, and for the same reason, the orchestra had to be a modest one. Thirdly, I was then

[1] For a discussion of Franz's contribution to the Bach scores, see William Foster Apthorp's *Musicians and Music-Lovers;* Charles Scribner's Sons; 1895. C. V. V.

studying both counterpoint and conducting, as well as choral mass-leadership; therefore I wished to begin at the beginning and not at the end. In the fourth place, the music I gave was old, yet beautiful and most suitable and useful for an exclusively choral organization, such as the Free Music School. Nevertheless I felt somewhat disconcerted; and to me, who often had misgivings about myself, it seemed at times, that I had really done something rather unseemly. I believe it was in connection with this concert (or possibly the next one in the season of 1875–76, also with an ultra-classic program, which I shall describe later) that I once received a letter from Balakireff, in which he referred to my "languidness and flabbiness of soul" or words to that effect. In those days V. V. Stasoff kept darkly silent, somehow, whenever conversation turned to my work; Cui on the other hand, as I recall, made rather cutting remarks about it.

As for my work as Inspector of Naval Bands, I exploited it that season, arranging, in the fall, a grand concert of the united bands of the Naval Department, in Cronstadt. The concert was given at the Manège; the bands of both Cronstadt and St. Petersburg participated. Among the numbers performed were several of my arrangements, including the *Egmont Overture,* the March from *Le Prophète,* and *Slavsya!* (Be glorified!). The concert went with unanimity and precision under my direction. I stayed a whole week in Cronstadt for the rehearsals. There were two and sometimes even three rehearsals a day, separately—for the wood and the brass, and jointly for all. On these I spent my time from morning till night with brief respites, and, truth to tell, I was tireless. I don't know whether the Naval Bands will ever again play with the same finish and unanimity as they did then, but of this I am positive, that never before had they been compelled to pull themselves together, to such an extent. My wife and Cui came to hear the concert. The Manège was full enough. The Cronstadt audience listened with their mouths wide open in amazement at this event, so novel and unheard of; musically, however, they appreciated the concert but little. Since then, during my entire tenure of Inspectorship, there was an established custom of giving annually two or three such concerts under my direction. Subsequently these concerts were transferred to a theatre where seats were built on the stage as is done in St. Petersburg at the In-

valid Concerts. After I had left the post of Inspector, these concerts ceased entirely.

During that same season my *Antar* was conducted by me at one of the Russian Symphony Society's concerts, and under the following circumstances. After Balakireff's retirement, the concerts had come under Napravnik's direction. Between the time of his playing my *Sadko* in 1871 (before I became professor at the Conservatory) and the season of 1874–75, my compositions were never performed by him for some reason. Azanchevski told me that he had repeatedly urged Napravnik to perform one of my compositions, especially recommending *Antar* to him. "Then he might as well conduct it himself," replied Napravnik. What "then he might as well conduct it himself!" meant,—whether his disinclination to soil his hands with my composition or the desire to place me in a presumably difficult position—I do not know. I repeat the story from hearsay. Owing to this reply, Azanchevski proposed to me to conduct *Antar*. I accepted without any particular fear, as I was beginning to feel a certain ease in appearing before audiences. I conducted *Antar* from memory, and it went off in an orderly fashion, and even with some success. The *Antar* which was then performed had been re-orchestrated by me and harmonically somewhat purified; the score, as well as a four-hands arrangement by my wife, was soon published by Bessel. When re-orchestrating it I did away with the third bassoon and the third trumpet appearing in the original score.

In the spring of 1875 I had a number of fugues as well as rather tolerable canons written, and also tried my hand at *a capella* choruses. We rented a summer house in Ostrovki on the Nyeva River, near Potyomkin's former estate, and soon moved there.[1]

The summer went somewhat monotonously. At Ostrovki I worked assiduously at counterpoint. From time to time I made trips to St. Petersburg and Cronstadt to review the Naval Bands and, aboard the steamer, wrote in my note-book, without tiring, various contrapuntal exercises and fragments.[2] During that

[1] Written in Yalta, July 23, 1893.

[2] In regard to Rimsky-Korsakoff's determination to acquire technique, Chavkovski, writing to Mme. von Meck, says: "Rimsky-Korsakoff was overcome by despair when he realized how many unprofitable years he had wasted, and that he was following a road which led nowhere. He began to study with such zeal that the theory of the

summer I composed, among other things, several successful piano fugues, shortly after published by Bessel, and some *a capella* choruses, but which precisely—I don't remember. Thus the summer slipped by. We lived in solitude and had visitors only on two occasions: the pianist D. D. Klimoff with his wife, and Cui. Early in September we returned to St. Petersburg.

schools soon became to him an indispensable atmosphere. During one summer he achieved innumerable exercises in counterpoint and sixty-four fugues, ten of which he sent me for inspection. From contempt of the schools, Rimsky-Korsakoff suddenly went over to the cult of musical technique. . . . At present (1877) he appears to be passing through a crisis, and it is hard to predict how it will end." In an earlier letter (1875) to the composer of *Antar,* Chaykovski wrote: "You must know how I admire and bow down before your artistic modesty and your great strength of character! These innumerable counterpoints, these sixty fugues, and all the other musical intricacies which you have accomplished—all these things from a man who had already produced a *Sadko* six years previously—are the exploits of a hero. . . . How small, poor, self-satisfied and naïve I feel in comparison with you! I am a mere *artisan* in comparison, but you will be an *artist,* in the fullest sense of the word. . . . I am really convinced that with your immense gifts—and the ideal conscientiousness with which you approach your work—you will produce music that must far surpass all which so far has been composed in Russia. I await your ten fugues with keen impatience." C. V. V.

CHAPTER XIII

1875–76

A capella choruses. Concerts of the Free Music School. A. Lyadoff and G. Dütsch. Collections of Russian Songs. The Pagan Sun-cult. Resumption of meetings with Balakireff. The Sextet and the Quintet. Editing the scores of Glinka. Revision of *Pskovityanka.*

The season of 1875–76 was a hard one for my family. In October our daughter, Sonya, was born. My wife fell ill and did not leave her bed for several months. I was in a miserable frame of mind; still my regular work continued. The Conservatory, the Free School, the Naval Bands, went on as usual. As for work on counterpoint it had now passed to the composition stage. I wrote several *a capella* choruses for mixed voices, principally of contrapuntal nature; some of them were afterwards performed at the home soirées of the Free School, and all were published. Owing to the predominance of counterpoint in the work on which I was then engaged, many of the choruses are heavyish and difficult to perform; others are dry. Among the rather heavy yet successful choruses, nevertheless, I count *The Old Song* (Koltsoff's[1] text) written in the variation form; the chorus, *The Moon is Sailing,* rings lighter and more transparent. The acme of difficulty, in contrapuntal invention and for purposes of execution, is to be met with in the four variations and fughetto on the Russian song *Nadoyeli nochi, nadoskoochili* (Tired am I and wearied of the nights) for four female voices. This number might serve as a thorough solfeggio for an experienced chorus, although it was written without application of enharmonization. I also published, through Bessel, three newly composed smaller pieces: *Waltz, Song and Fugue* (C sharp minor) and also handed over to him for publication the best of my piano fugues. Once I

[1] Koltsoff (1808–1842), a poet of the people who sang the steppes of Southern Russia, the life of the tiller of the soil, the monotonous existence of the Russian peasant woman. His poetic form has the irregularity of Russian folksong. C. V. V.

showed these fugues to Y. I. Johansen, a Conservatory colleague of mine, who was considered an expert in harmony and counterpoint. He was greatly pleased with them and, I believe, was convinced henceforth that I had got somewhere and would not exactly shame my professional title. While I was studying counterpoint, I occasionally asked Y. I. for advice and hints, but never showed him the exercises themselves; that was the first and the last time he saw the six fugues I had prepared for publication. The rumour that I had written some 50 fugues during the summer (the number was somewhat exaggerated; I don't remember their exact number) and that I was hard at work on counterpoint in general, also reached the Conservatory. Now they began to regard me a "strict" contrapuntist and "reliable" professor, and, from the extreme left, they shifted me somewhat nearer the centre.

The Free School ran according to the system I had introduced. We gave two concerts that season. The program of the first concert was classic again.[1] I gave excerpts from the Bach Mass in B-minor, with which I was then enraptured. To learn the famous and most difficult *Kyrie* was an achievement on the part of a chorus of amateurs. Excerpts from the Oratorio, *Samson,* were given with new orchestration written partly by myself and partly by Conservatory pupils, under my direction. To give *Samson* with Handel's original score, calling for a large organ, which alone could fill in all the gaps, was out of the question, and I preferred to re-orchestrate it, with the assistance of my pupils. This gave them an excellent opportunity to exercise their talents. In the *Samson* recitatives I had rather a hard time as conductor, but everything went off well, including the *Coriolanus* Overture. The program of the second concert I made up entirely of Russian numbers.[2]

Let me remark, in passing, that Borodin's closing chorus (given by us) which, in the epilogue of the opera (subsequently done away with), extolled Igor's exploits, was shifted by the author himself to the prologue of the opera of which it now forms a part. At present this chorus extolls Igor as he starts on his expedition against the Polovtsy. The episodes of the solar eclipse, of the parting from Yaroslavna etc., divide it into halves which fringe

[1] cf. Appendix III.
[2] cf. Appendix IV.

the entire prologue. In those days this whole middle part was non-existent, and the chorus formed one unbroken number of rather considerable dimensions.

The concert went smoothly. It offered some difficulties for my conducting. Two orchestral rehearsals preceded it. At that period I was somewhat hot-headed at times, when I noted negligence. I remember that during a rehearsal of one of that season's concerts the orchestra's errand-man Yuzefovich, who had forgotten to prepare something, got such a tongue-lashing from me that the musicians actually began to hiss me. I calmed down, as I feared to irritate the orchestra. On another occasion, as I recall it, at a rehearsal of the School, I yelled at the librarian of the School, Buslayeff, because he did not bring the music on time, or something of that nature. Be that as it may, I should not have raised my voice, speaking too much in the tone of a superior. The amateur-librarian, of course, took offence, but the matter was arranged to our mutual satisfaction. Such fits of taking the tone of a superior occasionally seized me; with growing self-conceit, possibly the lessons of service in the Navy were resurrected in my memory.

That very season the following occurred. Those inseparable cronies, A. K. Lyadoff and G. O. Dütsch, my talented Conservatory pupils, quite young at the time, had grown incredibly lazy and had ceased coming to my class altogether. Azanchevski talked the matter over with me, but finding them unmanageable, decided to expel them. Soon after their expulsion, the youngsters came to my house, with the promise that they meant to work, asking me at the same time to intercede for their re-admission to the Conservatory. I was immovable and refused point blank. The question is, whence had such inhuman regard for forms overmastered me? Or was it the result of my contrapuntal studies, just as excesses of commandeering were the result of my military-naval school training? I do not know; but to this day, bureaucratic fits of this nature occasionally overtake me. Of course, Lyadoff and Dütsch should have been immediately re-admitted, like the prodigal sons that they were; and the fatted calf should have been killed for them. For, indeed, Dütsch was very capable and Lyadoff was talented past telling. But I did not do it. The only consolation, possibly, is that everything is for the best

in this world of ours—both Dütsch and Lyadoff became my friends subsequently. But let me return to the Free School.

Its concert with a Russian program raised my credit anew in the eyes of my musical friends: Cui, the Stasoffs, Musorgski, etc. In reality it proved that I was not altogether a deserter or renegade, that in my heart and soul I still clung to the Russian School. As for Balakireff, I only know that he was not entirely in sympathy with my idea of giving an exclusively Russian concert, and that the dislike of specifically Russian programs that had ever been with him, remained with him to the end. He recognized only mixed concerts of Russian and foreign music of modern tendencies, and admitted an exclusively Russian program only as an exception, for which there was no occasion at the School. Whether he thought that by putting Russian compositions in a separate box, as it were, we showed fear of standing on a level and in company with Europe and, so to speak, chose ourselves a place at a separate table or in the kitchen out of deferential modesty; or whether he considered purely Russian concerts less varied in comparison with mixed concerts—I have been unable to make out to this day. He alleged the latter reason, but from certain signs it seemed to me that there was recognizable in him the desire to be more frequently at one and the same table with Liszt, Berlioz and other Europeans. Liszt, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Beethoven, Balakireff, Cui, Berlioz,—seemed to be on an equal footing when appearing side by side. Placed apart from the foreigners, however, the Russians would not enjoy that right, as it were. I believe this was his reasoning; however, I do not set it forth as absolute truth.[1]

This year the financial affairs of the Free School grew somewhat worse. The preceding season's concert and the classic concert of this season had brought in fair receipts, though those of the second were inferior to those of the previous year; the Russian Concert with its two rehearsals now brought a deficit. At that time, in St. Petersburg there were already evidences of that lan-

[1] Edward MacDowell held a precisely similar theory in regard to American music. He stoutly maintained, and not without reason, that no great compliment was paid to American composers by giving a concert composed exclusively of American music. On the other hand, to play an American composition between an overture of Brahms and a Beethoven symphony meant something. C. V. V.

guid attitude toward concert music, which has been more and more on the increase since. The revival of the Free School and I, its new director, had roused the public's interest at first, but even with the second season that interest began to cool; while the Russian program evidently did not strike responsive chords in the hearts of the public. It is noteworthy that the Free School's large choir whose members, it would seem, could attract their friends to take an interest in the affairs of the School and support it,—in reality did not attract the paying public. Everybody wanted to get as many free tickets as possible, and nobody was willing to pay even a moderate price. Thus matters stand in St. Petersburg today; and not only in St. Petersburg, but also throughout all Russia.

According to the Constitution and by-laws of the School, its financial affairs and executive powers were vested in a Board of eight members of which I was chairman. I recall being incapable of conducting the meetings. I had no idea of parliamentary rules. I was ill-informed as to the method of keeping minutes, of voting, of unanimity, of minority opinion, etc. Our conducting of business was honest beyond reproach, though negligent on occasion, and I remember that once a member of the Board, P. A. Trifonoff (subsequently a private pupil of mine and later one of my intimate friends), left the Board, owing to our slovenly methods; and he was probably right. At our general meetings for the purpose of reading annual reports and electing members of the Board, I had further difficulties; administrative matters were not to my taste. In addition to the above occupations, another work, new to me, turned up in the season 1875–76. Since the previous year I had taken a strong interest in Russian folksongs; I scanned all sorts of collections, of which, up to this time, I had seen very few, with the exception of Balakireff's wonderful gathering. I conceived the idea of publishing one myself. And now T. I. Filippoff, a profound lover of Russian songs, who had formerly sung them splendidly, though no musician at all, proposed to me to take down from his dictation the songs he knew, and to compile for him a collection with piano accompaniment. T. I. Filippoff made this offer to me at Balakireff's suggestion. During his estrangement from us all, Balakireff had grown in-

timate with T. I. on religious grounds, I believe. Rumours that Balakireff had become a pious man were wide-spread. Filippoff had long been known as a man zealous in orthodox faith and church matters. Even in the old days, Balakireff used to tell as a joke, the droll story "of the passage of the holy galoshes from Bolvanovka to Zhivodyorka." The narrative was the invention of Shcherbina, I think, and related how T. I. Filippoff, while in Moscow, on a visit to Pogodin's on Bolvanovka street, had left his rubbers behind him. As a reward for his life as it were, so filled with sanctity, the "holy galoshes" had come on by themselves to his lodging on Zhivodyorka! It was alleged that in honour of that event there was established the feast "of the passage of the holy galoshes from Bolvanovka to Zhivodyorka"! In Balakireff's actual mental estate, his intimate relations with Filippoff were not at all unnatural.

So then T. I. came to me with the request that I take down Russian songs as sung by him; this I did in the course of several sessions. He now possessed but the frailest remnants of a voice reported to have been fine in former days. In those days, loving Russian songs as he did, he used to get together with the best singers from among the common folk, learning their songs from them or occasionally holding contests with them. The forty songs I recorded from his rendering were principally lyric in character (*golosoviya,* or vocal, and *protyazhniya,* or slow); some of them seemed to me to have been corrupted by the soldiering and factory elements, while others had remained pure. Of ceremonial and game songs there were comparatively few; yet it was in those very songs that I was particularly interested, as the most ancient that have come down to us from pagan times and have therefore been preserved most nearly in the original form. The idea of making a collection of my own, comprising the greatest possible number of ceremonial and game songs, pre-occupied me more and more. After making a record of Filippoff's songs, (and he was satisfied with their accuracy) I harmonized them twice over; I was not quite satisfied with the first harmonization, finding it was neither sufficiently simple nor even Russian. Some two years later, this collection of Filippoff's songs, with a preface by the collector, was published by Jurgenson.

My own collection I gathered by slow degrees. First, I in-

corporated into it all the best material I had found in Prach's [1] and Stakhovich's old collections, which had become bibliographical rarities. The songs taken from these collections I set forth with a more correct division as to rhythm and bars and also added new harmonizations. Secondly, I took into my collection all the songs I had learned by heart from my uncle Pyotr Petrovich and from my mother, who in their turn had heard the songs in 1810–20 in localities of the Governments of Novgorod and Oryol. Thirdly, I wrote down songs from the mouths of some of my acquaintances, like Anna Nikolayevna Engelhardt, S. N. Krooglikoff, Mme. Borodina, Musorgski and others in whose musical ear and memory I had sound faith. In the fourth place, I recorded songs from the mouths of such of our servant girls as had been born in districts distant from St. Petersburg. I rigidly avoided whatever seemed to me commonplace and of suspicious authenticity. Once, at Borodin's, I struggled till late at night, trying to reproduce a wedding song (*Zvon Kolokol,* Ringing Bell) ; rhythmically, it was unusually freakish, though it flowed naturally from the mouth of Borodin's maid, Doonyasha Vinogradova, a native of one of the Governments along the Volga. I had all sorts of trouble with the harmonization of the songs, recasting in every way imaginable. Taken together with my other work, the making of my collection took nearly two years. I arranged the songs in departments: First, the *bylinas* (epic songs), then the *slow* and the *dance* songs. Then followed the *game* songs and *ceremonial* songs in the order of the cycle of pagan sun-worship and the festivals, still surviving here and there to this day. First in this series came spring songs, then the *rusalniya* (for Whitsunday), the *troyitskiya* (for Trinity Sunday), and *syemitskiya* (for the seventh Thursday after Easter Sunday) ; then summer *khorovod* (round dance) songs, marriage songs and *vyelichalnyia* (glorification) songs. I read some descriptions and essays on this side of folk-life by Sakharoff, Tyeryeshchenko, Sheyn and Afanasyeff, for instance; was captivated by the poetic side of the cult of sun-worship, and sought its survivals and echoes in both the tunes and the words of the songs. The pictures of the ancient pagan period and spirit loomed before me, as it then seemed, with great clarity, luring me on with

[1] It was from this collection that Beethoven culled the Russian themes he used in his Razumovsky Quartets. C. V. V.

the charm of antiquity. These occupations subsequently had a great influence in the direction of my own activity as composer. But of that later.

If I am not mistaken, toward the end of the season 1875–76, after a lapse of many years, I paid occasional visits to Balakireff, who had begun, as it were, to thaw out of his long frozen state. The immediate occasions for this renewal of visits were, in the first place, my intercourse with Filippoff for the purpose of recording songs; in the second place, L. I. Shestakova's projected edition of the scores of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and *A Life for the Tsar,* which Balakireff had undertaken to edit, at the same time expressing a desire to have as his collaborators myself and A. K. Lyadoff (then no longer a pupil of the Conservatory); in the third place, the lessons in musical theory which I gave to various private individuals, recommended by Balakireff, led to our meeting. Regarding these lessons, however, I have something to relate.

So far, my only private pupil in harmony had been I. F. Tyumenyeff, afterwards author of translations and original novels, as well as of several songs. While studying harmony and counterpoint myself, I had found it both useful and pleasant to have a pupil in that field, to whom I imparted as systematically as possible the information and devices I had acquired through self-instruction. Now, however, when my work in harmony and counterpoint had become known in the musical world, I was gaining the reputation of a "theoretician," despite the fact that in reality I always was a "practical" man, pure and simple. At the words "theory of music," "theoretician," in the minds of people without close acquaintance with these matters, and even in the minds of those who have musical talent, yet who have been spared that cup, there forthwith arises some conception of a quite absurd nature. A similar absurd conception evidently had arisen in Balakireff's mind, too. In those days there began to spread among amateurs, particularly among piano-playing ladies, the fashion of studying "theory of music." Balakireff, who then had a good many piano pupils particularly among lady amateurs, began to recommend me to them as instructor in the theory of music, and I obtained pupils one after the other. My pupils, male and female (the latter outnumbered the former), did not seem to know what they wanted to learn. My instruction embraced the study of elementary theory

and the beginning of practical harmony, mostly according to Chaykovski's text-book. Most of these women and men pupils objected to solfeggio studies and ear-training; accordingly, this vaunted study of theory was really not worth a pinch of snuff. Yet, they yearned to study theory as a food without relish, and frequently passed the whole hour in talking of music in general. As they paid well for their lessons in theory, they preferred to have me teach them, coming so to speak to the fountain head; but they did not understand that there is absolutely no need of being taught reading by a *littérateur,* arithmetic by an astronomer, etc. I complained to Balakireff that the ladies he had recommended to me often proved utterly talentless, and that I should prefer to give up certain pupils, because teaching them was labour lost. Balakireff usually said that one should never give up any pupils; and should give to each even the little he is capable of grasping. This very inartistic logic appeased me, and so I was rather busy with lessons during the next ten years. Filippoff's songs, the projected publication of Glinka's scores, and lessons in the homes of Balakireff's friends or acquaintances, brought us close to each other once more; the more so as Balakireff was already on the mend and had come out of his seclusion. Nevertheless, I found him greatly changed, but of this later.[1]

In 1876, the Russian Musical Society announced a prize contest for a work in chamber-music. The desire to write something for this contest seized me, and I set to work on a string sextet in A-major. I had begun it in St. Petersburg and I completed it at our summer place in Kabolovka, where we lived that summer, in the circle of relatives, together with V. F. Purgold and my wife's sisters, Mmes. A. N. Molas and S. N. Ashkharumova. By then my wife had begun to recover from her illness.

My sextet shaped itself into five movements. In it I now strove less for counterpoint, but Movement II (Allegretto Scherzando) I wrote in the form of a very complicated six-part fugue, and I find it very successful as to technique. It resulted in a double fugue, even with counterpoint at the tenth. In the Trio of the Scherzo (Movement III) I also made use of the form of a three-part fugue for the first violin, the first viola and first cello in tarantella time, while the other instruments play the accompaniment

[1] July 25, 1893. Yalta.

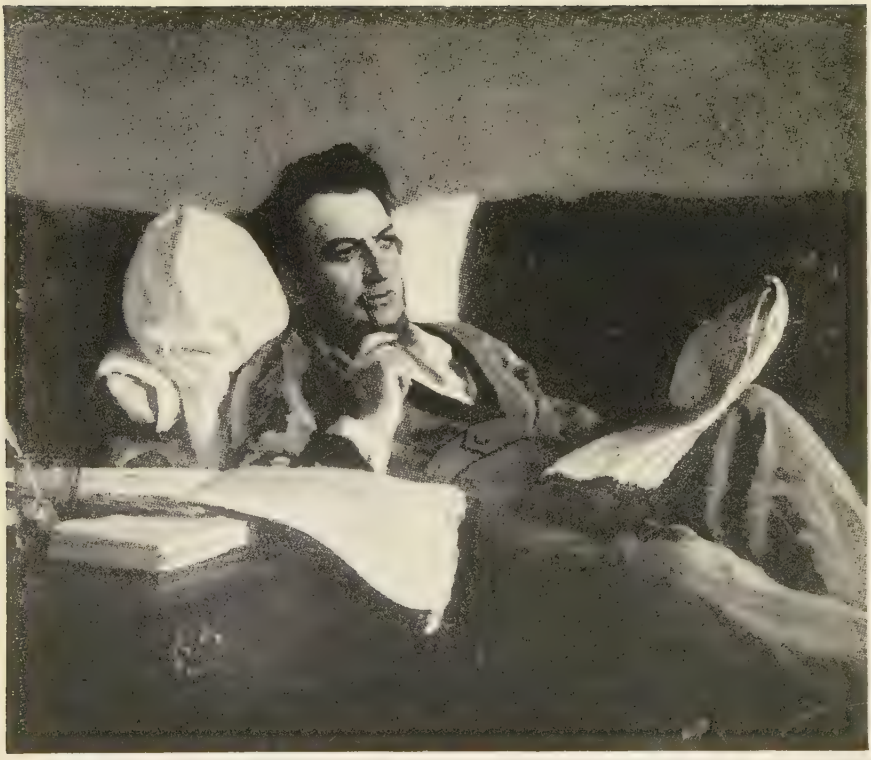
to the fugue continuously in pizzicato chords. The Adagio proved melodious with a very ingenious accompaniment. Movements I and V gave me less satisfaction. Taken all in all, the work proved technically good, but in it I still was not myself. After I had completed the sextet, I took it into my head to write for the same contest a quintet for the piano and wind-instruments; of the latter I selected the flute, the clarinet, the French horn and the bassoon. I composed the quintet in three movements. The First Movement was in the classic style of Beethoven; the Second (Andante) contained a fairly good fugato for the wind-instruments, with a free voice accompaniment in the piano. Movement III (Allegretto vivace), in rondo form, contained an interesting passage: an approach to the first subject after the middle part. The flute, the French horn and the clarinet, by turns, play virtuoso cadenzas, according to the character of each instrument, and each is interrupted by the bassoon entering by octave leaps; after the piano's cadenza the first subject finally enters in similar leaps of the bassoon. Yet even this composition did not express my real individuality; but at all events, it is freer and more attractive than the sextet. The sextet and the quintet, neatly transcribed by copyists, were forwarded with mottoes to the Directorate of the R. M. Society. During the summer, I also composed several three-part choruses *a capella* for men's voices; these were later published by Bitner, and subsequently became Byelyayeff's property. The summer passed in work on the above compositions and my song collections; in the fall, after moving to our former rooms in St. Petersburg, our musical life resumed its usual course.

By autumn, my meetings with Balakireff became quite frequent. I have already said that I had found a striking change in him. As early as the last season, or even the season before that, V. V. Stasoff, who had met him once in the street, had said: "Balakireff is not the same, not the same; even his glance is no longer what it used to be." On visiting him I observed much that was new. However, many things did not appear absolutely new to me; I recognized some of his former traits, only they had assumed altogether fantastic forms. I scrupulously avoided touching on religion, but once I roused his irritation when I quoted the well-known saying: "Trust in God, but don't be remiss yourself" (the Lord helps those who help themselves). Still I have it on good

authority that with some of his friends, like Trifonoff and Lyadoff, who had begun to visit him at that time, he held religious discussions; in these he usually stressed the lack of sagacity and the stupidity of those who held views differing from his. This, however, was his usual method in argument. In general, his intolerance toward people who disagreed with him in anything or acted and reasoned in any way independently, on lines different from his, was as deep-rooted as before.

Lyudmila Ivanovna Shestakova, who worshipped the memory of her brother's genius, had decided to publish, at her own expense, the full orchestral scores of Glinka's operas of which Stellovski then held the publishing rights. According to the agreement, she reserved the right to a stated number of copies of these scores, while the rest of the edition was to continue the firm's exclusive property. There existed no original full orchestral score of *Ruslan,* and we used a copy of it that Dmitri Vasilyevich Stasoff had in his possession, and which, it was claimed, Glinka himself had verified. Of course, this part of verification by its author had been extremely superficial, and the score contained a large enough number of slips of the pen and misunderstandings, which came to light upon our perusal. The engraving was done by Röder in Leipsic, and we examined the copies made for the purpose (or copied many things ourselves) and read proof. *Ruslan* was edited first, then *A Life for the Tsar.* We gave almost two years to the work; my share also included the orchestration of the stage music performed by a military band in *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* Balakireff and I proved poor proof-readers (Lyadoff was the best of the lot), and we issued both scores with numerous important mistakes. For examples, in the entr'acte to Act II of *Ruslan* a whole phrase for the violins was omitted. Some corrections made by Balakireff seem very questionable to me: like the bassoon's phrases in the romanza *Ona mnye zhizñ* (She is my life to me), or the drum introduced by him into the first *Slavsya* (Be glorified!). In Glinka's original score there had been a line with "drum" written over it, but it had no music, and the rhythmic drum figures were inserted by Balakireff on his own initiative on the ground that Glinka, as it were, had forgotten to write it in. Such corrections of quasi-misunderstandings Balakireff was very fond of making, and I trust that, at some time in the future, the scores of Glinka's operas will be re-pub-

lished after painstaking revision by a conscientious musician who knows his business. Under Balakireff's influence, Lyadoff and I often chimed in with him in the work on Glinka's scores. Now, however, I view the matter differently and am far from being delighted with our handiwork. For my part, I was carried away by enthusiasm and did many impracticable things, in orchestrating for a military band the respective parts of *Ruslan*. Thus in the Introduction to Act I, the stage band was to be brass, in Glinka's scheme; I followed his idea accordingly, but took a brass band with the full complement current in our Guards regiments. For Act IV, again in accordance with the composer's intentions, I wrote the orchestration for a mixed band of brass and wood-wind, both again with the full complement current in the Guards. Thus a performance of *Ruslan* called for two complete heterogeneous regimental bands. Glinka himself hardly wanted this! But that is not all. In Act V, I had the imprudence to unite the two bands in full complement—the brass band and the mixed band. The result of this was sonority so deafening that no theatre orchestra could hold its own against it; and this was manifested once, when Balakireff gave the whole *Ruslan* finale at a concert. The theme and all the figures for the strings were completely drowned by the military bands which performed their parts in my orchestration. To the Glinka scores were also added arrangements, for theatre orchestra alone, of the numbers whose performance, according to Glinka's score, called for a military band on the stage. These arrangements were made by Balakireff splendidly, save for the futile application of the natural-scale brass instruments; as usual, Balakireff was not strong on this, as he was guided by Berlioz's *Traité d'Instrumentation* and not by practical knowledge. However, these arrangements sound beautiful and right, and they translate Glinka's ideas correctly. The end of the Oriental dances is an exception; here Balakireff composed extra chromatic figures for the wind-instruments, but they are in the spirit of Glinka. The edition of the *Ruslan* score was sumptuous; that of *A Life for the Tsar* was simpler and less fine. Of course both editions were very respectable and useful achievements, undertaken at the initiative and expense of the composer's sister, and carried out by us. But our sins were considerable, at all events, and Glinka still awaits a future definitive correction of the edition which we treated now and then



M. I. GLINKA *from the painting by* I. Y. RYEPIN

in too light-minded and self-confident a spirit, even if we devoted much energy to it. No sooner had the edition come out, than numerous misprints and inaccuracies were discovered. Napravnik began to conduct Glinka's operas from our scores; however, he did not correct the bassoon's phrase in Ratmir's romanza according to the new score, but had it played as of old,—and he was right. Nor did he venture to introduce the drum that Balakireff had improvised in the first *Slavsya,* and that too was reasonable. As for the phrase for the violins, omitted in the score (in the entr'acte to Act III) the musicians played it without further ado as their parts had been copied from the old opera-house score. When this edition came out Balakireff detected some misprints and corrected them; soon an arrangement for a new printing of the *Ruslan* score (from the same plates), was made by Gutheil, who had just taken over the publishing rights of Glinka's compositions. But exclusive of some fifteen mistakes which Balakireff corrected, there still remained, in the new edition, a whole swarm of uncorrected errors. As for the score of *A Life for the Tsar,* it retains to this day [1] all the mistakes we had overlooked.

Work on Glinka's scores was an unexpected schooling for me. Even before this I had known and worshipped his operas; but as editor of the scores in print I had to go through Glinka's style and instrumentation to their last insignificant little note. There were no bounds to my enthusiasm for and worship of this man of genius. How subtle everything is with him and yet how simple and natural at the same time! And what a knowledge of voices and instruments! With avidity I imbibed all his methods. I studied his handling of the natural-scale brass instruments, which lend his orchestration such ineffable transparency and grace; I studied his graceful and natural part-writing. And this was a beneficent discipline for me leading me as it did to the path of modern music, after my vicissitudes with counterpoint and strict style. But my schooling, evidently, was not yet at an end. Parallel with my study of *Ruslan* and *A Life for the Tsar* I undertook a revision of *Pskovityanka.*

My first thought was to compose the Prologue, which had been entirely discarded, although it plays so important a part in Mey's drama. Then followed the idea of introducing the part of Chet-

[1] Written in 1893.

vyortka Tyerpigoreff, friend of Mikhaylo Toocha, and simultaneously developing the part of Matoota's daughter Styosha. Therewith the opera would gain a merry, if not a comic couple. Balakireff urged me to introduce the wandering pilgrims' chorus (in the form of a song Alyeksey, the Godly man) in Act IV, in the first Tableau of which the action takes place in front of the Pyechorski Monastery. The original melody of this verse in T. I. Filippoff's collection was to be used for the air of the chorus. I believe that Balakireff insisted on this insert, because the tune was beautiful as well as because of his predilection for saints and for the ecclesiastic element in general. The fact that the action takes place near the Monastery was the only reason advanced for this insertion; still I yielded to the urgent admonitions of Balakireff; once an idea had got into his head, he usually fought stubbornly to gain his point by hook or crook, especially if it concerned somebody else's business. With my characteristic easy-going nature, I yielded to his influence, as I had been accustomed to do in the old days. But after admitting this interpolation, I was bent on further developing it. I fell upon the following expedient: after the chorus of the wandering pilgrims who had camped out near the cave of Nikola the Simpleton, there was to appear the Tsar's hunting party, headed by Tsar Ivan, caught in the sudden rainstorm. During the storm the simpleton monk threatens the Tsar for shedding innocent blood, whereupon the superstitious Tsar Ivan, in fear, hurries away with his retainers, while the wandering pilgrims, together with Nikola, pass into the Monastery. The rainstorm quiets down; along with the last distant rolls of thunder there is heard the song of girls passing through the forest in search of Olga. From here on the action was to run as before, without any material changes. Balakireff approved my plan, as this promised the realization of his cherished idea of introducing the song about Alyeksey, the Godly man. Besides, he insisted upon substituting the other new music to the text of *Gospod' yediny voskryeshayet myortvykh* (The Lord alone doth resurrect the dead) for the final chorus which he hated. He urged both the revision of *The Maid of Pskov* and the inserts. He said that since, in his opinion, I should never write another opera equal to *Pskovityanka* in merit I ought to give myself up to it and polish it as it deserved. On what he based this assumption of his—I do not know, but I suppose one ought not suggest such a thought to a

composer not yet half-way to his grave. Another in my place would have taken him in earnest. But at the time I was not inclined to meditate upon my future; I merely desired to revise my opera, the musical structure of which did not quite satisfy me. I felt its harmonic exaggerations; I was aware that the recitatives were ill-made and ripping open at the seams; that there was lack of singing where singing should be; that there were both under-development and over-lengths of form, lack of contrapuntal element, etc. In a word, I was conscious that my former technique was unworthy of my musical ideas and my excellent subject. Nor did the instrumentation with its absurd choice of keys of the English horns and the trumpets (2 corni in F and 2 in C; trumpets in C), with its lack of variety in the violin bowing, with its absence of a sonorous forte,—give me any rest, in spite of the fact that I had won an established reputation as an experienced orchestrator. In addition to the mentioned inserts, additions and changes, I planned as follows,—to expand the scene of the *goryelki* (catching game); to recast completely Olga's arioso in Act III, with its pungent dissonances; to insert Ivan Grozny's aria into the final tableau; to compose a short characteristic scene of the boys playing knuckle-bones and Vlasyevna's tiff with them; to introduce a conversation between the Tsar and Styosha during the women's chorus in Act III; to add voice combinations and ensembles wherever possible; to refine everything, cut down over-lengths and recast the overture, the closing infernal dissonances of which now gave me no rest. I set to work, and within eighteen months, approximately by January, 1878, all this labour had been accomplished, the Prologue had been composed; likewise the new scene at the Pyechorski monastery, as well as all inserts and changes had been made, and the complete score of the new *Pskovityanka* was ready. As I had now mastered my technique, it cannot be said that the work had been done rapidly. Moreover, one must take into consideration the fact that I had written my score very carefully and legibly,—and that takes a good deal of time, *comparatively*. My Prologue turned out to be written in a style of composition different from the style of the opera proper. Vyera's part, which included also the cradle song I had written in 1867 and published among my songs, was crowded with melody. The tempi and rhythms of the Prologue were varied; its musical fabric was well-knit and compact, and did not consist of

patches forcibly sewed together. For Vyera's account of her visit to the Pyechorski Monastery, I borrowed music from Act IV of the opera, when Olga appears in the woods near the cloister. The Boyar Sheloga's entrance was characteristic enough, and the close was dramatic. The Prologue was preceded by a short Overture, which opened with a happy trumpet fanfare in Russian style; this fanfare was subsequently intoned again and again behind the scenes, prior to Boyar Sheloga's entrance. The real, the long Overture was to be played after the Prologue, and just before the First Act. I had made indubitable progress in operatic composition, and this was noticeable in the Prologue, as a new composition. But in the course of the rest of the opera considerable heaviness was apparent as a result of the remodeling of its structure. My eagerness to make it contrapuntal, to create a wealth of independent parts, had placed a heavy burden on the musical content. Yet there were also happy changes; thus Olga's arioso in Act III had gained in tunefulness and sincerity of expression. The final chorus, with wholly new music of seven-part structure, with a crescendo of the voices on the word "Amen," proved greatly to Balakireff's liking, indeed it had been written in D flat major to please him. The Tsar Ivan's air in the Phrygian mode was melodious, but it led some people to remark, for some unknown reason, that Ivan Grozny ought not to sing it. As for the new scene near the Pyechorski Monastery, the pilgrims' chorus written fugato pleased Balakireff and many others; together with many others, I, too was pleased with the entrance of the Tsar's hunting party and the rainstorm, written partly under the influence of the scene in the African forest in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*. But the part of Nikola the Simpleton was weak past question for it had been superimposed on the orchestral background of the storm; it was an empty part of dead, dry declamation.

The Prologue, in its entirety, was performed with piano accompaniment, at my house. Mme. A. N. Molas sang the part of Vyera; O. P. Vyesyelovskaya (one of the active woman members of the Free Music School) sang Nadyezhda; Musorgski sang the part of the Boyar Sheloga. Cui, Musorgski, and Stasoff praised the Prologue, though more or less guardedly. Balakireff, on the other hand, was indifferent both to it and to the entire opera in its new guise, excepting the pilgrims' chorus, the storm and the

final chorus. As to the other changes and inserts in *Pskovityanka,* Musorgski, Cui, and Stasoff approved them, but their attitude toward its new form was, on the whole, cold and restrained. It looked as if even my wife regretfully looked back to its previous form and as if the changes had struck no sympathetic chord in her. Naturally all this rather hurt me; and, most important of all, I, too, felt that in its new guise my opera was long, uninteresting and rather heavy, in spite of a better structure and notable technique. It was orchestrated with natural French horns and trumpets. Now these were really natural-scale instruments, and not the good-for-nothing parts that my former compositions had contained. Still the exquisite harmony and modulations of *The Maid of Pskov,* in reality, called for chromatic-scale brass instruments. I adroitly got around the difficulties entailed by the natural-scale instruments. Nevertheless, I injured considerably the sonority and natural quality of the orchestration of my opera, the music of which had originally been planned without regard for natural-scale French horns and trumpets, and therefore did not rest on them in the way it should. In every other respect, the instrumentation showed a step in advance: the strings played a great deal and with a variety of strokes; the forte was sonorous where the natural-scale brass did not interfere. The *tessitura* of the vocal parts was raised, and that was an improvement. After completing my work on *Pskovityanka,* in 1878, I wrote to the Directorate of the Imperial Theatres of my desire to see the opera produced in its new form. Lukashevich had left the board, and Baron Kister now managed its affairs single-handed. At a rehearsal he asked Napravnik, whether the latter had seen my new score; he replied in the negative. There the matter ended, and *Pskovityanka* was not revived. I confess I was pleased neither with Napravnik's attitude nor with his reply; but was Napravnik at fault in answering so curtly and indifferently? In view of my keeping aloof from Napravnik, it would have been too much to expect Napravnik to say anything in my favour, without having seen the score. He was right a thousand times. Failures usually hurt; but in this instance I felt the hurt but little. I felt as though it were for the best that I bide my time with *The Maid of Pskov.* In compensation, I felt, too, that my 'prentice days were over, and that soon I should undertake something new and fresh.

CHAPTER XIV

1876–77

Various compositions. The fate of the Sextet and of the Quintet. Three concerts of the Free Music School. Borodin's Second Symphony. The beginnings of *May Night.* Prize contest for choral compositions. Soirées of the Free Music School. Our musical circle. Borodin's home life. Overture and entr'actes to *Pskovityanka.*

During 1876–77 I composed, so to speak "by the way," variations for the oboe on a theme of Glinka's song *Chto krasotka molodaya* (Wherefore doth the beauteous maiden?) and a concerto for the trombone; both of these with the accompaniment of a military (wind) band. These pieces were performed by the oboist Ranishevski and the trombonist Lyeonoff at the Cronstadt concerts of the United Bands of the Naval Department, under my direction. The soloists gained applause, but the pieces themselves went unnoticed, like everything performed at Cronstadt. The audiences here were still in that stage of musical development, where no interest is taken in the names of composers, nor indeed in the compositions themselves; and in fact it never occurs to a good many to speculate on whether the composition has such a thing as a composer! "Music is playing," "He played that fine," that is as far as they got in Cronstadt.[1] These compositions of mine were written primarily to provide the concerts with solo pieces of less hackneyed nature than the usual; secondly, that I myself might master the virtuoso style, so unfamiliar to me, with its solo and tutti, its cadences, etc. The Finale of the trombone concerto was not bad, taken all in all, and was effectively orchestrated. My third and last composition of this character was a *Konzertstück* for the clarinet with the accompaniment of a military band; but this was not performed at the Cronstadt concerts, as I did not like its heavy accompaniment, when I tried it at a rehearsal. During

[1] A state of affairs not exclusively Cronstadtian. C. V. V.

the same season (1876–77) I wrote four smaller pieces for the piano: Impromptu, Novellette, Scherzino, Etude, published by Bitner. The fate of my Sextet and my Quintet (sent in for the prize competition) was as follows. The jury awarded the prize to Napravnik's Trio with the motto "God loves Trinity" (All good things come in threes); it found my Sextet worthy of honourable mention, but disregarded my Quintet entirely along with the works of the other competitors. It was said that Leschetizky had played Napravnik's Trio beautifully at sight for the jury, whereas my Quintet had fallen into the hands of Cross, a mediocre sight reader, who had made such a fiasco of it that the work was not even heard to the end. Had my Quintet been fortunate in the performer, it would surely have attracted the jury's attention. Its fiasco at the competition was undeserved, nevertheless, for it pleased the audience greatly, when Y. Goldstein played it subsequently at a concert of the St. Petersburg Chamber Music Society. As to the Sextet, the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich (who was as a rule well inclined toward me) once met me at the Conservatory and said: "What a pity that (in awarding the prizes) we did not know that the Sextet was thine (he used "thou" in addressing me,—a force of habit); a great, great pity!" I bowed. One can conclude from this as to how the business of prize competitions was managed in the Russian Musical Society, in those days. At the moment I recalled, too, the contest for the opera *Vakoola the Smith,* when it was no secret to any of the jury that one of the operas—and such and such a one—came from Chaykovski's pen; the question arose in my mind, whether the names of some of the composers had not been known in advance this time as well?

Balakireff was quite displeased that I had taken part in the competition; this was known to everybody, as my Sextet had received honourable mention, and the envelope containing my name had been opened. He thought that I, as well as his friends and protegés ought to be "out of the running." But I recalled how, once upon a time, after my *Serbian Fantasy* had been written, Balakireff (then already an officer of the Russian Musical Society) had suggested sending in my *Fantasy* to a prize competition; he would take it upon himself, he said, to arrange a competition in the above Society for this very purpose, but I had declined, and

our conversation had never been resumed. The loser is always to blame; but the winner is always right, no matter by what means he has won. This time I was to blame; however, had the competition proposed by Balakireff taken place,—I should have been in the right. Nevertheless, Balakireff expressed his displeasure at my "tactlessness,"—for our relations at that time were far from what they had been in the old days. Possibly my lack of piety kept him from growing intimate; however, had his attitude toward me been the old one, he would not have hesitated forthwith to begin leading me on the paths of righteousness, as he endeavoured to do with A. Lyadoff, Trifonoff and others. More likely, he had simply cooled towards me and tried to influence me only in so far as I was connected with affairs that interested him. As for the inner life, in which he was so fond of meddling, whenever he overwhelmed me with paternal friendly cares, in that he let me severely alone. Of our talks during that period I shall cite the following, but just how it came about I don't remember. I told him that I considered others' advice injurious during composition, and that I preferred to have the composition come out poorer, provided it were at least original and altogether its author's. To this he replied that he viewed the matter differently; that the best method of composition would be one in which the composer, in the process of creating, had been guided by the counsels of people with fine critical abilities; that these people ought not neglect the slightest trifle until the composition satisfied them completely; and that in this way only could a composition turn out flawless. And what did he cite in support of his views? Neither more nor less than the Jesuit Order (!) where the acts of each member are irreproachable—from the Order's point of view, to be sure,—since the acts of each have been pondered and weighed by all the members; and that therein lies the guarantee of the Jesuits' success. The Jesuit Order, and artistic creation! How strange a juxtaposition! No doubt, he, of all people, would never have endured collective surveillance of himself. But he would not have endured it even in the case of others, whose creative gifts he had at heart; he would have done away with every vestige of collectiveness and replaced it with his own individual criticism, which he would have considered sole and absolute.

The affairs of the Free School were beginning to rouse a lively

interest in Balakireff, and his pressure on me was very perceptible. Balakireff insisted that we arrange several subscription concerts; deferring to him, I consented to give three. Their programs were suggested by Balakireff to a considerable extent. Nevertheless, I recall having over-ruled him on the point of performing Schumann's *Manfred* in its entirety. For some reason Balakireff held out against it, though he had always liked *Manfred.* Or was it perhaps, because *Manfred* had been suggested by me, at my own initiative?

The first concert, November 30, 1876, consisted of the complete score of *Manfred,* my *Serbian Fantasy,* excerpts from Berlioz's *Lélio* (Harp of Æolus and fantasy on Shakespeare's *Tempest*), and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The concert went off splendidly; only the rendering of Beethoven's Symphony was somewhat ordinary. The chorus sang excellently. For the requiem in *Manfred* I placed the chorus members in the front rows of the orchestra, which had been reserved for that very purpose. The effect was excellent. This number we performed in E-minor (half a tone higher than written), and the orchestra had to transpose the music. At rehearsals for this concert I had noticed that the chorus flatted irresistibly, when singing this requiem in the original key. It occurred to me to raise it half a tone; and the singers kept on the given note without flatting a jot. Therefore, I decided to do the same at the concert, and the chorus was sung finely; I believe it was even repeated. I had familiarized myself thoroughly with the scores of the pieces to be performed, and conducted the entire concert from memory; I remember, however, that in the transition from the Scherzo to the Finale of Beethoven's Symphony my memory began to play me false, and I looked quizzically at the concert-master Grigorovich; he nodded his head at the approach of the Finale, and I was able to change the time and the tempo at the proper moment. This transition is, of course, a passage difficult to memorize, owing to the monotony of the sustained harmony and of the uniform violin figures endlessly repeated, with only the last two bars *tremolando* to warn of the approaching Finale. I could not forgive myself my absent-mindedness and my floundering, though nobody had noticed it; and since that time I decided always to conduct with the score under my eyes. And really, the conductor must always

be in a position to come to the musician's aid during a performance and show him when to come in; yet this is utterly impossible to do in conducting a whole concert from memory. Even if it is a pleasure to the audience to watch the self-confidence of a conductor leading from memory,—the opposite is always pleasanter to the orchestra! Afterwards I observed, and even had orchestra musicians tell me, that Balakireff (who up to a certain time always led from memory) never showed them when to come in, and that the musicians, unaided by him, had to be on the alert for themselves. An accident at the performance of *Sadko,* which I shall relate in its proper place, made Balakireff resort to the score ever after.

The second concert of the Free School, on January 25, 1877, consisted of Mozart's *Requiem* and Borodin's First Symphony, which latter I conducted very badly.

At the third concert (March 8, 1877) I gave excerpts from Liszt's oratorio, *Christus,* excerpts from Schubert's Unfinished Symphony (B-minor), my own *Old Song* (chorus *a capella*) and Balakireff's *1000 Years,* not yet rechristened *Roos'* (Russia). The concert went off safely; even the *Stabat Mater Speciosa,* most difficult of performance (from Liszt's oratorio). The enharmonic modulations in this latter chorus dragged the singers irresistibly to a gradual lowering of pitch, while, in the interims between the singing of the choir, there are interludes for the organ. The organ (harmonium) was played by my conservatory pupil Bernhard (subsequently professor and inspector),[1] and, whenever the choir sang half a tone flat, he transposed his interludes also half a tone, and thus we ended safely a third below where we had started. Subsequently, when Borodin related this to Liszt, the latter said that in Germany the same thing had always happened in performances of that chorus!

Having carried through three concerts with rather difficult programs, I felt, to a certain degree, accusomed to the conductor's art; and therein lay the benefit I derived from them. As for the money side of the business, the three subscription concerts had quite disappointed the school, despite the fact that, thanks to Balakireff, we had several honorary members paying from 50 to 100 rubles. For the greater part, these honorary members were wealthy pupils

[1] Later Director of the Conservatory.

of Balakireff, and he had made them see the advantage of enrolling. After all was said and done, so little money was left in the treasury of the School that it was useless even to dream of concerts during the ensuing year.[1]

Among the musical events of the season of 1876–77 must be noted Napravnik's performance of Borodin's Second Symphony in B-minor, at a Russian Musical Society Concert. I can't recall how and under whose influence this performance was brought about, but I vividly remember the concert itself.

Written and revised during many years, the B-minor Symphony was reduced to its ultimate form by the composer principally under the influence of our talks about orchestration, talks that had begun some three years earlier. Studying, together with me, much concerning wind and particularly brass-instruments, Borodin was as enthusiastic as I over the fluency, the ease of handling the tones, and the fulness of the scale of chromatic brass-instruments. It turned out that these instruments were not at all those unwieldy implements we had heretofore imagined, and many composers still imagine them to be. Military band scores and various virtuoso solos convinced us of that. And that was perfectly true. But at this point our enthusiasm ran away with us. The B-minor Symphony was orchestrated too heavily, and the rôle of the brass was too prominent. How often Borodin delightedly showed me his score and how enraptured I grew with his bold handling of the orchestra's brass! In Napravnik's performance of the Symphony the whole heaviness of this method of instrumentation was brought out. The Scherzo suffered most, for in this movement the rapidly changing chords had been entrusted to the French horns. Napravnik found it necessary to take this Scherzo at a much slower tempo than proper—that it might be performable and clear. And we were vexed at him and swore at the coldness of his performance and his distortion of the tempo; yet he was perfectly right. People liked the Symphony very moderately; and we naturally were most displeased. However, some two years later the author himself realized his mistake: the instrumentation of the Scherzo was considerably lightened, and at the next performance of the Symphony (under my conductorship, in the season of 1878–79) it was possible to play it in the right tempo.

[1] August 1, 1893, Yalta.

V. V. Stasoff always called this the "paladin Symphony," and this characterization is correct; the only exception is the Scherzo (though not its Trio), which is of a character alien to the rest of the Symphony. By the way, the brief modulatory transition from B-minor to F-major at the beginning of the Scherzo was invented (i. e., improvised) in the old days by Balakireff; in Borodin's scheme, the Scherzo had originally begun with the note C repeated in the French horns.

The summer of 1877 I spent at the villa in Shuvaloff Park (First Pargolovo). Here we lived together with V. F. Purgold, the Ashkharumoffs and the Molas family, as in the preceding summer. The season slipped by uneventfully. I worked at *Pskovityanka,* devoting a good deal of time to it; and occasionally I made brief trips to St. Petersburg and Cronstadt in connection with my official duties. That summer, in the intervals between regular work, my thoughts turned more and more frequently to Gogol's *May Night.* Since childhood I had adored *Evenings at a Farmhouse;* I preferred *May Night,* perhaps, to all the other stories of that cycle.

Even during our engagement, my wife had often urged me some day to compose an opera on this subject. Together we had read this story on the day I proposed to her. Since then the thought of *May Night* had never left me; and that summer especially it seemed to near realization. Certain musical ideas for this opera had suggested themselves even earlier, but that summer they came with greater persistence. I had already jotted down the plan and in part the libretto; I followed Gogol exactly as to subject matter, preserving as far as possible the dialogue in which the story abounds. I recall that in the summer of 1877 I had in mind the melody of the song "about the Mayor"; the theme of the burden in the Trinity Sunday song of the girls; the beginning of Kalenik's *hopak* (Ukrainian dance) and such like trifles. Still I had made no serious attempt to carry out the idea of writing *May Night;* I kept on revising *Pskovityanka.* As far as I recall, the composition, or at least the orchestration, of the *Konzertstück* for clarinet, too, belongs among my occupations of that summer. At that time I was also partly busied with preparing for the press my own as well as Filippoff's folksong collection. In addition to all this, I also wrote an *a capella* chorus to the words and tune of the

folksong *"Pro Tatarski Polon"* (On the Tartar Captivity). This chorus as well as another on Koltsoff's text, in the form of a five-part fugue (written soon after the summer had ended) I wished to submit for the prize competition announced by the Russian Musical Society. I shall relate here the history of these choruses, thus running somewhat ahead.

When the final date of submitting the choruses approached, it turned out that I had been appointed to the jury that was to judge the submitted compositions. I did not want to decline, for fear of rousing suspicion that I was one of the contestants. However, when we considered the submitted compositions, I evaded giving an opinion; and later I kept away from the final deliberations; the jury designated my two choruses among the six to which the prizes were awarded. The authors of the other prize-crowned compositions were Taborovski, Solovyoff, Blaramberg and Afanasyeff, I believe. The leader of the jury in awarding prizes was F. F. Czerny, professor of the choral class at the Conservatory. Solovyoff, who was also on the jury, had behaved approximately as I had. At this contest, there appeared for the first time on St. Petersburg's musical horizon the name of Blaramberg, who had long lived in Moscow and was instructor at P. A. Shostakovski's Music School. P. I. Blaramberg, with whom I became intimate subsequently, was already known to me as a musician who had tried his hand in the field of composition. In years gone by, I had occasionally met him in Balakireff's circle; however, I had known him but slightly, and his essays at composition had not been heard of in those days. Later on he had vanished from sight for a long time. Prior to the above contest, I had become familiar with his manuscript work; there was some sort of suite of oriental melodies and dances, little to my liking.

During the season of 1877–78 there came an involuntary lull in the activity of the Free School. There was no money; it was impossible to give concerts. Nevertheless, I strove with might and main to keep up the non-public activity of the institution. We continued rehearsing various pieces, and arranged several soirées in the Town Council Hall with a low charge for admission to the public. The chorus sang either *a capella* or with piano accompaniment. Some of the amateur-members of the School I instructed in Mendelssohn's quartets, which were then sung at

the soirées. I also invited some Conservatory pupils for solo performances on the cello, the piano, etc. Of the vocal soloists, Mmes. A. N. Molas and O. P. Vyesyelovskaya, whom I have already mentioned, sang once each. The sisters, O. P. and Y. P. Vyesyelovskaya, had been zealous amateur-members of the Free Music School since the Lomakin-Balakireff days,—participating at first in the chorus and later as members of the School Board. During my directorship, O. P. taught singing and theory in the preparatory class, while Y. P. was treasurer of the school, accompanying the chorus at the above musical evenings "at home." Of the other active members of the School in my time let me mention the Messieurs Milanoff and Tsirus. All the bustle in arranging our concerts, all sale of tickets, all billboards, sending out notices, obtaining official permits, etc. fell upon them, and I marvelled at their zeal and devotion to the cause. G. I. Tsirus, in addition, sang bass in the choir, of which he was a good and firm leader. In all "at homes" he was never averse to singing in quartet, nor would he refuse even a solo, like Glinka's *Midnight Review*. The instructor of the men's section of the preparatory class was one Mukhin, sexton and, later, deacon of the Church of Samson. P. A. Trifonoff was no longer active at the School. S. N. Krooglikoff, subsequently one of my close friends, was at that time also a member of our chorus.

Our honorary members, enrolled by Balakireff, continued to pay their dues during that slack season of the School. Our organization of honorary members was a peculiar one: one could pay 50 rubles, or 100 rubles, but the hundred-ruble members enjoyed no spiritual or material advantages whatever over those paying fifty. Furthermore, neither the former nor the latter enjoyed any advantages over the ordinary attendant at concerts. For his 50 or 100 rubles, an honorary member received a single personal ticket in the first row of the orchestra for all concerts during the year. But a first row season ticket could be bought by a regular subscriber for 15 or 20 rubles. This being the case, what was the object of becoming an honorary member? Well, in the Russian Musical Society such members had the privilege of attending all the concerts, regular as well as non-subscriptional, of the Society, all public and private soirées of the Conservatory and all rehearsals. At the Free School, there were no such privi-

leges; the honorary members, persuaded by Balakireff, disinterestedly paid in their 100 or 50 rubles, though enjoying no special rights, not even that of sitting together with the members of their families. The latter had to buy ordinary season tickets. The dues of the honorary members supported the School; yet those members did not provide support for the School's sake or for music's sake, or for the sake of me, the School's Director who did not know some of them from Adam. They gave solely in answer to Balakireff's pleas. In this respect, then, the School had Balakireff exclusively to thank.

Sometime during these last years, N. V. Shcherbachoff reappeared in St. Petersburg, where he occupied a luxurious apartment at the *Hotel Europe*. As before, he composed a great deal. On his visits to my house, when the music circle gathered, he occasionally played his new pieces, after long coaxing. Many of his pieces we liked, though many of them seemed rather unfinished. He also played numerous fragments which never saw completion at all. To the same degree as he was at home in the purely pianistic style, so much at sea was he in the orchestral; accordingly, the excerpts from his *Hero and Leander, St. Cecilia* and other symphonic and choral works are hardly destined to be heard in public. However, despite a certain lack of originality in the creative gift, there was much in his music that was beautiful and graceful. His *Zig-zag, Papillons* and much else found favour with us.

Balakireff began to visit us, even if rarely. As a rule he did not stay long, and—strange thing!—we all felt relieved when he went. In his presence we were all too shy to express an opinion, to play anything new or something recently composed, and even too shy to be unconstrained. After his departure there usually sprang up a freer conversation; and both Borodin and Musorgski were not at all reluctant about playing some new or fragmentary piece of theirs. Musorgski played excerpts from *Khovanshchina* and sang songs of which he wrote quite a number at that time. To these days belong his *Plyaska smyerti* (Dance of Death) and *Byez solntsa* (Without Sun), written to texts by Count Golyenishcheff-Kootoozoff. Excerpts from Borodin's *Prince Igor* and material for the A-major Quartet were played rather frequently by their composer at our house. During sev-

eral preceding years Borodin had written in the rough the following parts of his opera: Konchak's aria; Yaroslavna's arioso and her lament; Vladimir Galitski's song; Prince Igor's aria and the duet of Act IV. Konchakovna's seductive aria still remained uncompleted, was being revised, transposed and played in bits, and in various forms. The magnificent dance of the Polovtsy and the March were also extant in rough drafts.

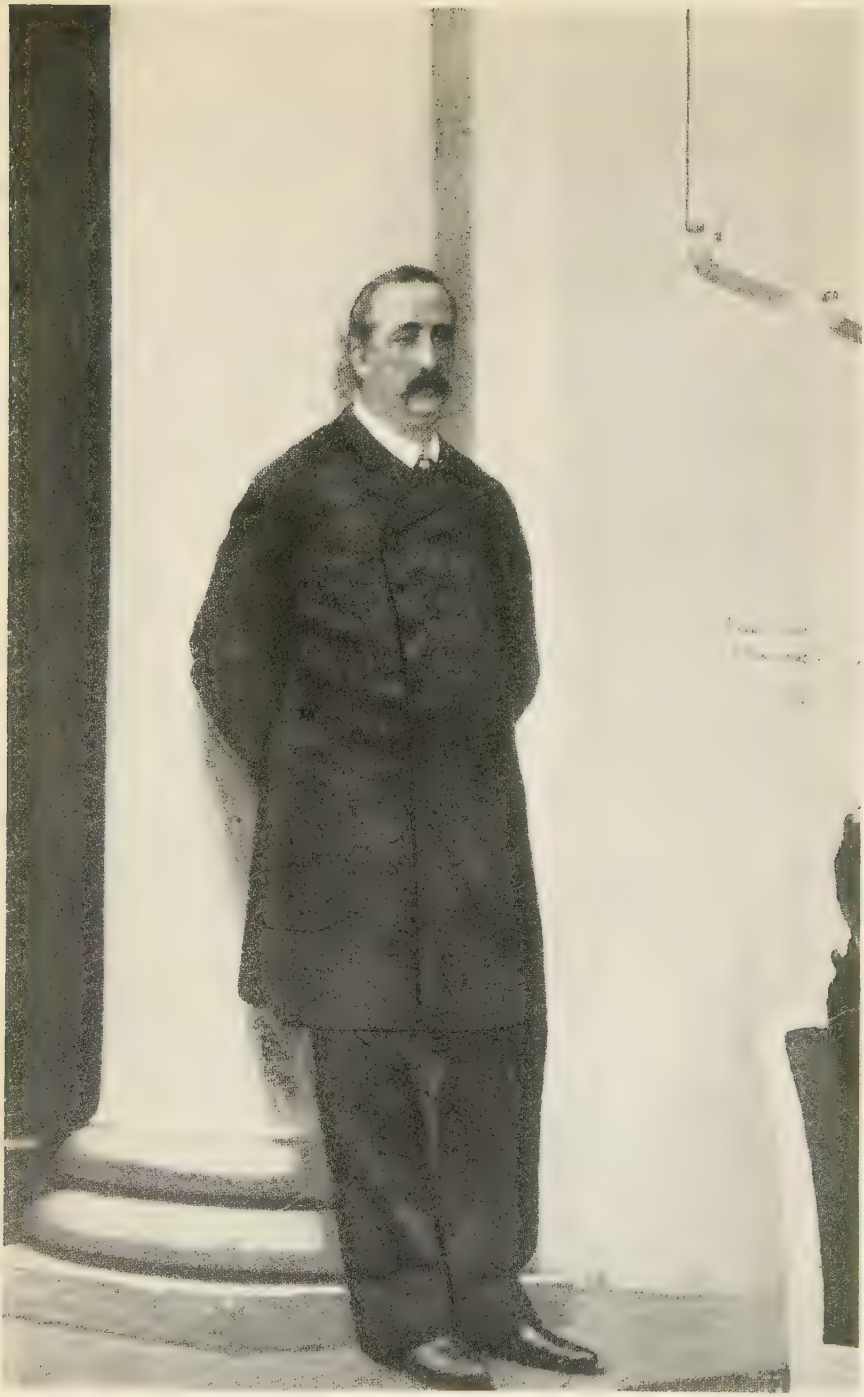
V. V. Stasoff was an unfailing member at all gatherings: a distinct lack was felt when he was absent. According to his invariable habit, he hardly seemed to listen to what was being played, he ceaselessly and very loudly chatted with those near him; this, however, did not prevent him from going into great raptures and exclaiming from time to time: "Splendid! Superb!" etc. Cui's visits were comparatively rare; yet he appeared now and then with new songs, of which he composed a vast number about this time. N. N. Lodyzhenski, whose official duties kept him abroad, came on to St. Petersburg but rarely; and so his presence at our gatherings was a rarity. Having joined the service and having thus, so to speak, stricken himself from the roster of promising composers, he no longer let his ambition dwell on an opera, or on a symphony, nor did he play his innumerable fragments and beginnings. Notwithstanding V. V. Stasoff's reminders, his *Rusalka* remained uncompleted. Every time he returned from St. Petersburg to the place of his service in the Slavic lands, he promised to send *Rusalka* and let me orchestrate it, but, to the infinite regret of all of us, his promises remained unfulfilled. Approximately to the same period belongs the appearance, in our circle, of a young amateur singer, V. N. Ilyinski. Having come to St. Petersburg as a medical student, Ilyinski, who had a baritone voice, proved to be an ardent lover of the music of our circle. He amazed us all with his understanding and talented interpretation of songs, especially Musorgski's comic songs. Musorgski's *Rayok* (Peep Show) and *Seminarist* he sang superbly; the composer himself was highly pleased with the interpretations.

Of all my intimate musical friends I visited Borodin the oftenest. During these latter years his affairs and surroundings had changed as follows. Borodin, who had always given but little of his time to music and who often said (when reproached for it)

that he loved chemistry and music equally well,—began to devote still less time to music than before. Yet it was not science that enticed him. He had become one of the prominent workers in establishing medical courses for women and had begun to participate in various societies for the aid and support of student-youth, especially women. The meetings of these societies, the office of treasurer, which he filled in one of them, the bustling, the solicitations in their behalf, came to take up all of his time. Rarely did I find him in his laboratory, still more rarely at musical composition or at the piano. Usually it turned out either that he had just gone to or was just returned from a meeting; that he had spent all day driving about on those same errands, or else had been writing business letters, or working over his account-books. Add to these his lectures, the various boards and meetings of the academic conference, and it will become clear that there was no time at all left for music. It always seemed odd to me that certain ladies of Stasoff's society and circle, who apparently were admirers of Borodin's talent as composer, mercilessly dragged him to all sorts of charitable committees, harnessed him to the office of treasurer, etc. and thereby robbed him of the time which could have been used for creating wonderful, artistic musical works. Thanks to the charitable hurly-burly, his time was frittered away on trifles that could have been attended to by such as were not Borodins.[1] Moreover, knowing well his kind and easy-going nature, medical students and all sorts of student-youth of the fair sex, besieged him with every manner of solicitation and request, all of which he tried to fulfil with characteristic self-denial. His inconvenient apartment, so like a corridor, never allowed him to lock himself in or pretend he was not at home to anybody. Anybody entered his house at any time whatsoever and took him away from his dinner or his tea. Dear old Borodin would get up with his meal or his drink half-tasted, would listen to all kinds of requests and complaints and would promise to "look into it." People would hang on him with unintelligible explanations of their business, gabble and chatter by the hour, while he himself constantly wore a hurried look, hav-

[1] "In winter," Borodin wrote to a friend, "I can only compose when I am too unwell to give my lectures. So my friends, reversing the usual custom, never say to me 'I hope you are well' but 'I do hope you are ill.'" C. V. V.

ing this or that still to do. My heart broke at seeing his life completely filled with self-denial *owing to his own inertia.* To this must be added also that Yekatyerina Sergeyevna continually suffered from her asthma, passed sleepless nights, and always got up at 11 or 12 A.M. Alyeksandr Porfiryevich had a difficult time with her at night, rose early, and got along with insufficient sleep. Their whole home life was one unending disorder. Dinner time and other meal-times were most indefinite. Once I came to their house at 11 in the evening and found them at dinner. Leaving out of account the girls, their protegées, of whom their house had never any lack, their apartment was often used as shelter or a night's lodging by various poor (or "visiting") relations, who picked that place to fall ill or even lose their minds. Borodin had his hands full of them, doctored them, took them to hospitals, and then visited them there. In the four rooms of his apartment there often slept several strange persons of this sort; sofas and floors were turned into beds. Frequently it proved impossible to play the piano, because some one lay asleep in the adjoining room. At dinner and at tea, too, great disorder prevailed. Several tom-cats that found a home in Borodin's apartment paraded across the dinner-table, sticking their noses into plates, unceremoniously leaping to the diners' backs. These tom-cats basked in Yekatyerina Sergeyevna's protection; various details of their biography were related. One tabby was called *Rybolov* (Fisherman), because, in the winter, he contrived to catch small fish with his paw through the ice-holes; the other was called *Dlinyeñki* ("Longy") and he was in the habit of fetching homeless kittens by the neck to Borodin's apartment; these the Borodins would harbour, later finding homes for them. Then there were other, and less remarkable specimens of the genus felis. You might sit at their tea-table,—and behold! Tommy marches along the board and makes for your plate; you shoo him off, but Yekatyerina Sergeyevna invariably takes his part and tells some incident from his biography. Meantime, zip! another cat has bounded at Alyeksandr Porfiryevich's neck and, twining himself about it, has fallen to warming that neck without pity. "Listen, dear Sir, this is too much of a good thing!" says Borodin, but without stirring; and the cat lolls blissfully on.



A. P. BORODIN *from the painting by* I. Y. RYEPIN

Borodin was a man of very strong physique and health; a man of no whims and easy to get along with. He slept little, but could sleep on anything and anywhere. He could dine twice a day, or go dinnerless altogether, both of which happened frequently. Borodin would drop in on a friend during dinner; he would be invited to join the meal.—"As I have already dined today, and, consequently, have formed the habit of dining, I might as well dine once more"—Borodin would say and seat himself at table. They would offer him wine.—"As I don't drink wine as a rule, I may treat myself to it today"—he would reply. Next time it might be just the contrary. Having vanished and remained lost all day, he would drop in at evening tea and calmly sit down near the samovar. His wife would ask him where he had dined and only then would he recollect that he had had no dinner at all. Dinner would be served, and he would eat it with gusto. At evening tea he would drink cup after cup without counting. His wife would ask: "Have another?" "How many have I had?" he would ask in turn. "So and so many." "Well, then I've had enough."—And it was the same in many other things.

Approximately in 1876, Chaykovski, who then lived in Moscow, began to come to our house occasionally, once or twice a year. His visits often coincided with our musical gatherings. Once (I do not recall the year) he came and, in reply to the usual inquiry, as to what he had composed, said he had just written his Second Quartet in F-major. We begged him to let us hear it, and, without much coaxing, he played it through. All of us liked the quartet very much. A few years later Chaykovski ceased playing his own compositions for others. I also recall that during one of his visits at our house he stated that he was composing an orchestral fantasy on Shakespeare's *Tempest*. He added that, in depicting the sea, he intended to use as his model, within limits, Wagner's introduction to *Das Rheingold* constructed on a single triad. Subsequently, however, when I heard the *Tempest* performed by an orchestra, I did not find any perceptible similarity between Chaykovski's delineation of the sea and Wagner's of the Rhine. At that time, as well as afterwards, Chaykovski was charming to talk to, and a man of the world in

the best sense of the term,—always animating the company he was in. In the course of my reminiscences I shall have numerous occasions to return to him; I shall therefore confine myself now to the above remarks.

In the fall of 1877, I became convinced that the revision of my *Pskovityanka* had led to no satisfactory results in the artistic sense, and that it was necessary to work over the opera once more; accordingly, I decided to utilize in a different way the material that came into the second version of *The Maid of Pskov* and, after suitable selection, to arrange incidental music for Mey's drama. The minor overture to the Prologue; the Introduction to the *vyeche* scene; the introduction depicting Olga (to Act IV of my first version) were exactly right for this purpose. To this I added the entr'acte to Act III of the drama; I took the music from the scene of the game of Knuckle-bones and composed an additional entr'acte to the last Act. In view of the reference to the Pyechorski Monastery in this act, the theme was the melody of the verse about Alyeksey, the Godly man. Thus the music to Mey's drama *Pskovityanka* assumed the following form:

a) Overture to the Prologue
b) Entr'acte to Act I (Olga)
c) Entr'acte to Act II (Vyeche)
d) Entr'acte to Act III (Game of Knuckle-bones)
e) Entr'acte to Act IV (on theme of the verse)

The same orchestration was retained as in the second version of the opera (with natural-scale French horns and trumpets.)

CHAPTER XV

1877–79

Beginning to compose *May Night*. A. Lyadoff. *Paraphrases*. Proposed trip to Paris. Completion of *May Night;* its characteristics. Borodin and Musorgski. Concerts of the Free Music School. First trip to Moscow. Compositions to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Tsar's reign. Beginning to write *The Fairy-tale*. The Russian Quartet. Work on *Prince Igor*. Borodin at his summer home.

During the winter of 1877–78, *May Night* began to absorb me more and more, and in February I set to work in real earnest. I wrote the orchestral score directly on enormous sheets of music paper ruled lengthwise, jotting down only the roughest, most fragmentary pencil notes. In the course of February, March and April I had done these scenes: Lyevko; the water nymphs and Pannochka (inclusive of Pannochka's disappearance); and the sunrise. The writing went easily and fast. As I recall, I worked at the end of this scene till far into the night. Besides this, I had written the *hopak* of Kalenik and the Trinity Sunday Song of Act I. I orchestrated with all manner of abbreviations (Clarinetti coi Oboi, Viola col Violoncello) counting as I did on an excellent copyist Pustovaloff (flutist in the Preobrazhenski Regiment), whom I had in view. In addition to the composed portion, there had accumulated a fair amount of material for the whole opera. The above instalment completed, I showed it only to An. Lyadoff. Both my wife and young Lyadoff liked, without reservations, what I had composed.

That winter Anatoli and I grew more intimate; he liked to visit us: our former relations of professor and insubordinate pupil had vanished. At that time and for a long time afterwards, Lyadoff lived with his sister Valyentina Konstantinovna (an artist of the Russian Dramatic Theatre). On his visits to our house, he was usually made to play the opening of his B flat

major Quartet, with its magnificent singing second theme. This fragment delighted us all, including Stasoff, who afterwards, in his article, *Twenty-five Years of Russian Art,* went so far as to proclaim that Lyadoff had in his portfolio a complete, magnificent quartet. Unfortunately, that quartet has never materialized to this day, and, of course, never will materialize. The fact that there was no continuation of this excellent opening belongs among those incomprehensible things about Lyadoff to which I shall have to refer many times. Besides this opening, Lyadoff played us also other fragments of his, chiefly for the piano, his *Biryul'ki* (Jack-Straws) for instance. At that time it was still possible to make him, a youth of twenty or twenty-one, sit down at the piano and play a composition of his own. Not so afterwards. Whether in a spirit of contrariness, or a desire to make a show of hard-heartedness, a sort of "Let them suffer," so to speak; or whether out of sheer laziness, no amount of coaxing, in later years, could induce him to play even a fully-finished composition of his own. And yet sometimes he would sit down unbidden and, for a full hour, to everybody's delight, play various fragments of compositions he had planned or actually begun. Though not a pianist, he played rather gracefully and neatly, even if somewhat sleepily, never forcing his tone beyond mezzo-forte.

Anatoli Konstantinovich was the son of Konstantin Nikolayevich Lyadoff, conductor of the Russian Opera, whom I have mentioned several times before this. His father, his uncle Alyeksandr (conductor of the Ballet Orchestra), a second uncle (a chorister) and a third (a cellist) had received their training under the Directorate of Theatres and had each passed a life-time as employees of the theatre, moving about in the theatrical world. I believe all of them, except the last, were a little inclined to loose living.

The brilliant musical gifts of Anatoli's father were stifled in continuous revelling and carousing. He frittered away his activity as composer on mere nothings, composing dance-music and pieces to order. Of his more important works, the skilfully knit fantasy, with chorus, on the song *Vozlye ryechki, vozlye mosta* (Near the river, near the bridge) is still widely-known.

Of Anatoli's mother I know nothing; she had long departed this world, when I first came to know him. Anatoli and his sis-

ter V. K. (subsequently wife of Sariotti, a singer of the Russian Opera) had been left to grow up as best they might. Their father, deep in his carousing and his liaison with the singer L., was never at home and never laid eyes on his children for weeks at a stretch. Though he drew a good salary, he very often left his children without a copper, so that they had to borrow money occasionally from the servants, to escape starvation. Of formal education and instruction there could be no question at all. On the other hand, however, Anatoli had unrestricted access behind the scenes of the Mariinski Theatre, where one and all, from the leading singer to the last lamp-lighter, spoiled him as the conductor's son. At rehearsals, he larked in the wings and clambered all over the boxes. In those days, that is before Napravnik's arrival, rehearsals were run in slipshod fashion. Not infrequently Konstantin Lyadoff gathered the orchestra, in groups, of course, at his own apartment. Before much work had been accomplished, they all sat down to a "bite" of something. There was no such thing as a piano-score in the case of many operas. The soloists were rehearsed to the accompaniment of several desks of the quartet. The music of the missing wind-instruments the conductor played on the piano or harmonium.

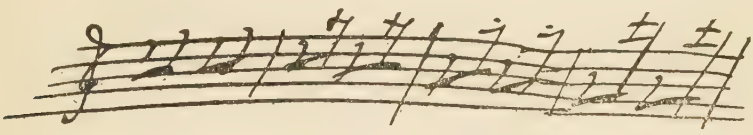
The social life of artists at that time was quite unlike that of the present. Wine flowed in abundance, and the treatment of the fair sex was quite free. The first week after Lent, when theatre performances had ceased, picnics on a large scale were the order of the day. To be sure, little Lyadoff could take no active part in these, yet he could observe to his heart's content. But he, the pet of the opera-troupe, the pet who frequently had nothing to eat at home, was irresistibly drawn by the operatic stage. Glinka he loved and knew by heart. *Rognyeda* and *Judith* delighted him. On the stage he appeared in processions and crowds, and later, when he had come home, he mimed a Ruslan or Farlaff, before the mirror. Of singers, chorus, and orchestra he had heard enough and more than enough. Amid such surroundings his boyhood had passed, without supervision and without system. Finally he was sent to the Conservatory; he was boarded at the house of Shustoff, one of the directors of the Russian Musical Society. At the Conservatory he was taught violin and piano, and indulged in numerous pranks with

his cronies, G. O. Dütsch and S. A. Kazakoff (subsequently a violinist in the Opera orchestra). Anatoli did not study the violin any too long; when he got as far as Kreutzer's Etudes he deserted the violin and took up theory. In Johansen's class in Theory, too, he did almost no work at all, and busied himself rather with essays at composition. Music pre-occupied him a great deal; in music he lived, composing in all its imaginable varieties; but he was most neglectful of class exercises. At last Johansen managed in some way to draw a tight rein on him, and Lyadoff brilliantly completed his courses in harmony, counterpoint and fugue. With all his heart he yearned to join my class, but, having once entered it, he began to show less and less zeal, and finally ceased coming to class altogether. At last the matter went so far, that Azanchevski was obliged to expel him and Dütsch from the Conservatory, as I have already mentioned elsewhere. The wretched surroundings of his childhood and the lack of proper rearing had made him lazy and incapable of forcing himself to do anything. When he lived at his sister's, it is said that occasionally he would ask her to give him no dinner until he completed his fugue or whatever other task had been set him at the Conservatory. He could do only what he particularly desired to do. He would receive a letter inviting him somewhere, for instance; since he had no wish to go, he made no move to, in fact, never even answered the letter. But notwithstanding all this, back of Lyadoff lay great natural intelligence, the kindest of hearts and enormous musical talent.

In the spring of 1878, Anatoli made up his mind to earn a Conservatory diploma, and to pass the final test which consisted mainly of composing a cantata. In order to be able to count on a performance of this test-composition at the Conservatory graduation exercises and, moreover, to avoid tests in extra obligatory courses, it was necessary to re-enter the Conservatory. With K. Y. Davydoff's consent, he was enrolled in my class (to be sure, merely to comply with the above formality). That year L. A. Sakketti and A. R. Bernhard were to graduate from my class. These two Lyadoff joined. The examination task required the composing of music for the closing scene of Schiller's *The Bride of Messina*. However, that assignment applied only to Bernhard and Lyadoff; Sakketti composed a Symphonic Allegro and a minor

psalm. All three pupils graduated brilliantly; but Lyadoff gave us really a fine piece of work. How easy it all was for him! Where did he draw his experience from! Indeed, he was most talented, and so clever, too! His *scene,* performed at the graduation exercises in May, 1878, caused general delight; Stasoff, for his part, made a great to do about it.

Late in the spring of that year, Borodin, Cui and I engaged on a joint composition of a peculiar nature. Lyadoff also joined us. Here is what it was. Some years before, Borodin, in fun, had composed a most charming and odd polka on the following motive:



Repeated over and over again, this motive was intended, so to speak, for one unable to play the piano, while the accompaniment called for a real pianist. As I recall it, I was the first to conceive the idea of writing, jointly with Borodin, a series of variations and pieces with this theme, constant and unchanging. I induced Cui and Lyadoff to join in the work. I recollect that at first Borodin showed hostility to this idea, preferring to publish his polka by itself, but soon he joined us. In passing, I remember Cui's astonishment, when I brought him the fugue on B—A—C—H (B flat—A—C—B), which I had composed with the accompaniment of the above motive. Without disclosing the secret, I played through the fugue on B—A—C—H minus the motive. Cui, naturally, did not warm to my composition. Then I asked him to play the tune; at the same time I, myself, struck up the fugue. Cui could not get over his amazement.

By the time we had to leave town for the summer, we had accumulated many pieces on this motive. I had even *too* many of them, and later excluded some from our collection, such as: sonatina, the chorale *Eine feste Burg,* the recitative alla J. S. Bach, etc. A few pieces of this collection, named *Paraphrases* and christened *Táti-táti* by V. V. Stasoff, were written in the summer of 1878, and some during the following season. In 1880 the *Paraphrases* were given for publication to Rater (the firm of Bitner) and he

published them. The *Paraphrases* so delighted Liszt, that he added a short transition of his own on the same motive and wrote us a flattering letter about them; this, V. V. Stasoff published in due course.

Balakireff showed a violent antipathy towards the *Paraphrases;* he was indignant at us for engaging in such nonsense, printing them, and showing them off. We had asked Musorgski to take part in our joint composition; he had even tried his hand, composing a gallop or something of the sort; he played us what he had composed. But he had swerved from our original plan, and had changed the constant motive, and his result was quite different. We called his attention to it. He replied that he had no intention of fagging his brains over it; accordingly, his participation in our joint writing came to nothing.

Towards the summer of 1878 the great exposition was being prepared in Paris. There were plans for concerts of Russian music at the Exposition, at the hall of Trocadéro. The initiative in this enterprise belonged to the Russian Musical Society. K. Y. Davydoff, who had taken part in the meetings held for this purpose, suggested me as conductor of the projected concerts,— and this was approved by the Directorate, led by the Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich. I had received no official notification; but Davydoff assured me that the matter had been arranged. I was leisurely thinking out the programs of the concerts, and preparing to go early in the summer. As my wife was to go with me, we did not look for a summer residence. The matter dragged along rather slowly and suspiciously. Nothing in writing and official came to me. Suddenly I learned (towards the end of May) that Nikolay Grigoryevich Rubinstein himself wished to assume the direction of these concerts, and that the Grand Duke was inclined in his favour. Probably in N. Rubinstein's mind and later in the Grand Duke's, there had sprung the thought that I was inexperienced and had, besides, exclusive and partial leanings toward our own circle, and was therefore not the person to conduct the Paris concerts; N. Rubinstein, on the other hand, was a representative musician exactly right for the occasion. Eventually it turned out that it was Rubinstein who went to Paris; I was side-tracked. Davydoff felt deeply offended at this turn of affairs; he told me a rather "stormy"

scene had taken place between the Grand Duke and himself. At the close of the interview with the Grand Duke, Davydoff started out of the room; but the Grand Duke caught hold of his hand;—he strove to free himself; in short a semblance of a struggle took place.

Thinking over at this hour what occurred at that time, I come to the conclusion that, although it was not quite fair of Rubinstein to cut the ground from under me, nevertheless both he and the Directorate were justified in their misgivings about me. I was indeed inexperienced; for me to go to the Paris Exposition was a trifle premature. Davydoff's suggesting me had been ill-advised and the cause of Russian music had but gained by the sending of Nikolay Grigoryevich. For a year or two after, I was sulky with him, and avoided him when he visited St. Petersburg; afterwards, however, all was forgotten.

We found a summer home late at Ligovo (Mme. Lapotnikova's) going there in mid-June. We rented it jointly with Vl. Fyod. Purgold and the Ashkharumoffs; the latter lived with us only a short while, presently going abroad.[1]

During the summer of 1878, at Ligovo, I wrote, in orchestral score, the overture, the entire scene of Hanna with the Mayor and Lyevko, Lyevko's story, the love-duet, Lyevko's first song, and also the song about the Mayor. Besides these, in August, I composed the whole finale of Act III (after Pannochka's disappearance).

Except for two or three trips to Cronstadt in connection with my official duties, I did not leave our summer home, as I recall it. In the latter part of the summer a frequent visitor was An. Lyadoff, who had spent the beginning of the summer in a village of the Borovichi canton. I remember that, as pastime and exercise, we each used to write a fugue a day on the same theme in D-minor.

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On October 5, our son Andrey was born. After the usual days of bustling and uneasiness, I turned once more to my opera. In October, I wrote the First Tableau of Act II, except the Vinokur's (Brandy-distiller's) story, as well as the *Proso* (millet)

[1] Written Sept. 5, 1895.

chorus for Act I. Early in November, I wrote the Vinokur's story and the Second Tableau for Act II. Thus the entire opera was ready in orchestral score, and I forthwith set to transcribing it for piano and voice; this I finished approximately near New Year. The libretto was submitted to the censor, and was licensed for performance; then the score, the piano-score and the libretto were forwarded, with the usual letter, to the Directorate of Theatres.

In my reminiscences of 1876–77 I spoke of my enthusiasm for the poetry of pagan worship, an enthusiasm that had originated in my work on ceremonial songs. That enthusiasm had not cooled even now; on the contrary, with *May Night* it led to a series of fantastic operas in which the worship of the sun and of sun-gods was introduced. I did this either directly, through subject-matter drawn from the ancient Russian pagan world (as in *Snyegoorochka* and *Mlada*), or indirectly, by reflection, in operas the subject-matter of which had been taken from later Christian times (as in *May Night* or in *Christmas Eve*). I say indirectly and by reflection; for though sun-worship had entirely faded before the light of Christianity, yet the whole cycle of ceremonial songs and games to this very day rests on the ancient pagan sun-worship which lives unconsciously in the people. The people, as a nation, sing their ceremonial songs by force of habit and custom, neither understanding nor suspecting what really underlies these ceremonies and games. Today, however, the last vestiges of ancient song[1] and, with them, all signs of ancient pantheism are evidently vanishing. All choral songs in my opera have a

[1] In his preface to *Modern Russian Songs* (Oliver Ditson Co.; 1921), Ernest Newman draws an interesting distinction between the German and Russian use of folk-elements in music. "The variety of style of the Russian song is the result of the variety of influences, racial, local, and cultural, to which it has been subject. German art-song has drunk as deeply of the fountain of folksong; but German art-music and German folk-music have always been so intimately associated that it is hard to say where the one ends and the other begins. It is not so much that the folk-music has been an influence upon the composers as that it has been part of their bone and blood and being. The moods, the prosody, the structure, the cadence of the folksong run, broadly speaking, through almost all the German music, sacred and secular, vocal and instrumental, of the last three hundred years. . . . In Russia the evolution was different. Russian folk-music had existed long before Russian art-music came into being; with the result that when composers fell under its spell, it became a genuine influence of which they were more or less conscious. Art-music, as the German musician of the mid-nineteenth century knew it, could not go to the German folksong for inspiration, for it had really never quitted it. But the Russian com-

ceremonial colouring or a game-colouring: the spring-game *Proso* (millet), the Trinity Sunday song *Zavyu vyenki* (I shall weave garlands), the *rusal'niya* songs (for Whitsunday), the slow song and the fast in the last Act, and the *khorovod* itself (round dance and song) of the water nymphs.[1] The very action of the opera I connected with Trinity or Rusalnaya week, called the Green Christmas; and even Gogol's drowned women I have turned into nymphs. In this way I managed to connect, with the subject I adored, that ceremonial side of folk-life which gives expression to the survivals from ancient paganism.

May Night was of great importance in my activity as composer, for reasons other than the one mentioned. Despite the abundant use of counterpoint (the fughetta, *Poost' ooznayut chto znachit vlast'*—"Let them learn what power means," the fugato on the words: *Satan, Satan! 'tis Satan himself!;* the combination of the slow and the fast *rusalniya* songs; the multitude of imitations scattered everywhere), I cast off in this opera *the shackles of counterpoint* still perceptible in the revised *Maid of Pskov.* Here I introduced, for the first time, large conjoint singing numbers (ensembles). In handling the voices, I adhered strictly to their real individual ranges; there is nothing of the kind in *Pskovityanka.* The numbers are always rounded off, wherever the scene permits. Singing melody and phrase replace the former inexpressive recitative superimposed on the music. Here and there a tendency is shown toward the *secco* recitative, which I employed subsequently, beginning with *Snyegoorochka.* However, in *May Night,* this tendency did not bring very happy results. Its recitatives are still somewhat awkward and really unsuitable for easy execution. Beginning with *May Night,* I seemed to have mastered transparent operatic instrumentation in Glinka's manner, although

poser who, having learned his technique and imbibed a good part of his idiom from the Western music of his day, turned then to his native folk-music, found in it an inexhaustible treasure-house of novelty. Thus we can speak of a genuine influence of Russian folksong upon Russian art-song." C. V. V.

[1] Girls, deserted by their lovers, who, according to the legend, have killed themselves and become water nymphs. These fantastic creatures also appear in Dargomyzhski's *Rusalka,* in Puccini's *Le Villi,* and in Adolphe Adam's ballet, *Giselle. May Night* was beautifuly produced (though with extensive cuts) in London by Serge de Dyagilyeff's Russian Ballet and Opera Company in the summer of 1914. I heard one of these performances and would say that, although the opera has lovely lyric moments and some effective comic scenes, on the whole it sounds old-fashioned and is unworthy of the genius of the composer. C. V. V.

here and there it lacks sonority. On the other hand, the strings play much and with freedom and vitality. *May Night* is orchestrated for natural-scale French horns and trumpets, in a manner to enable them really to play the opera. The scene demands three trombones without a tuba, and only in the song about the Mayor two piccolo-flutes are employed, so that, in general, the instrumental colour-scheme calls to mind that of Glinka. However, in Pannochka's singing, a distinct novelty was introduced: the accompaniment in constant glissandos of two harps.

The theme of *May Night* is bound up in my mind with memories of the time when my wife became my fiancée; and the opera is dedicated to her.

The orchestral score of my opera, submitted to the Directorate, was shortly examined by Napravnik and accepted upon his favourable verdict. The Board of Directors sent it for an opinion also to K. Y. Davydoff who found it to his liking; still, Napravnik's voice carried the chief and decisive weight. The parts were given to copyists; and, as early as the spring of 1879, chorus rehearsals began. The chorus-masters were I. A. Pomazanski and Y. S. Azeyeff, the same as in the days of *The Maid of Pskov*. It was scheduled for production during the following season of 1879–80.

During the season of 1878–79, the Free Music School had accumulated funds, after a year of silence and rest. Thanks to Balakireff's efforts, the honorary members had been paying their dues. Concerts could now be resumed. I announced four subscription concerts; they took place on January 16 and 23 and February 20 and 27. Each was a mixed program as in former years. Among others, the following numbers were performed for the first time: The *Khorovod "Proso"* (millet), the chorus of nymphs and the song about the Mayor from *May Night;* Liszt's *Hamlet;* the chorus from Lyadoff's *Bride of Messina;* Konchak's aria, the closing chorus and Polovtsian dances from Borodin's *Prince Igor;* the tableau at the Monastery of the Miracles (Pimyen and Grigori) from Musorgski's *Boris Godunoff;* Balakireff's *Chekh Overture*. At that time, *Prince Igor* moved slowly, but progressed notwithstanding. How much pleading and importuning I had to spend on dear old Borodin to persuade him to orchestrate several numbers for these concerts. His swarming engagements in connection with his professorship and medical courses

for women, were always in the way. His home life I have already described. Owing to his infinite kindliness and his entire lack of self-love, these surroundings made it extremely inconvenient for him to work at composition. One might come again and again and keep demanding how much he had written. Net result—a page or two of score, or else—nothing at all. To the query: "Alyeksandr Porfiryevich, have you done the writing?" he would reply: "I have." and then it would turn out that the writing he had done was on a batch of letters! "Alyeksandr Porfiryevich, have—you—finally—transposed such and such a number of the opera score?"—"Yes, I have."—he replies earnestly. "Well, thank the Lord! at last!"—"I transposed it from the piano to the table"—he would continue with the same earnestness and composure!—A really definite plan and scenario were still non-existent; at times more or less completed numbers were composed, and again —numbers that were merely sketchy and chaotic. Still, by this time, there had been composed—Konchak's aria, Vladimir Galitski's song, Yaroslavna's Lament and her arioso, the closing chorus, the Polovtsian dances and the chorus at Vladimir Galitski's feast. I had to beg the author for these excerpts, for performance at the concerts of the School. Konchak's aria he had orchestrated throughout, but there was no end to the waiting for the orchestration of the Polovtsian dances and of the closing chorus. And yet these numbers had been announced and rehearsed by me with the chorus. It was high time to copy out the parts. In despair I heaped reproaches on Borodin. He, too, was not overhappy. At last, giving up all hope, I offered to help him with the orchestration. Thereupon he came to my house in the evening, bringing with him the hardly touched score of the Polovtsian dances; and the three of us, he, An. Lyadoff, and I, took it apart and began to score it in hot haste. To gain time, we wrote in pencil and not in ink. Thus we sat at work until late at night. The finished sheets of the score Borodin covered with liquid gelatine, to keep our pencil marks intact; and in order to have the sheets dry the sooner, he hung them out like wash on lines in my study. Thus the number was ready and passed on to the copyist. The orchestration of the closing chorus I did almost single-handed, as Lyadoff was absent for some reason. Thus, thanks to the concerts of the Free Music School, some numbers were finished

partly by the composer himself and partly with my help, during that year as well as during the following season of 1879–80. At all events, had there been no concerts of the Free Music School, the fate of the opera, *Prince Igor,* would have been different.

At the rehearsal of the scene from *Boris Godunoff,* Musorgski behaved very queerly. Either under the influence of wine or from mere pose (he had developed a considerable turn for pose in those days) he often acted oddly; often he delivered himself of obscure and involved orations. At the rehearsal in question, he listened with a show of significant intensity to what was played (for the most part in ecstacy at the performance of individual instruments, often during the most commonplace and indifferent phrases), now pensively drooping his head, now haughtily lifting it erect, shaking his mane of hair, and then again raising his hand with the stagey gesture that had been his even before that. When, at the end of the scene, the tamtam representing the cloister-bell rang pianissimo, Musorgski made a low and deferential bow to it, his arms crossed on his breast. That rehearsal was preceded by a home-rehearsal at the house of the singer Vasilyeff I, who sang Pimyen. I was in charge of the rehearsing and did the accompanying. Musorgski, too, was present. After the rehearsal supper was served; the host got quite drunk and talked much bosh. Musorgski, on the contrary, kept himself well in hand. Grishka Otrepyeff's part was sung by the tenor Vasilyeff II. He was the old, patient plodder of the Russian Opera, who toiled and moiled on the stage without artistic ambition or vanity. Once upon a time he had a very fine voice; he was a man of much routine; irreproachably exact in all rôles; but despite all those qualities, he manifested no talent whatsoever. But, when it was necessary to learn a rôle in a day, or to substitute owing to some one's sudden illness—for such things, Vasilyeff was the man. Goodness knows how many of the highest and hardest parts he sang, from Sabinin in *A Life for the Tsar* (where he took the high C with his chest) down to insignificant couriers and messengers. The artists usually took part in the School concerts gratis. Vasilyeff II, too, sang without pay, asking only three rubles for gloves. As was his wont, he was letter perfect in his part; but at the end of the scene, when I suggested to him to sing the recitative freely, ad libitum, and promised to keep an eye on

him, he refused, saying: "No! I'd rather watch the stick (bâton)." In this respect, the singers of the Russian Opera had been rigorously drilled by Napravnik, who allowed no liberties.

The choruses from *May Night,* the excerpts from *Prince Igor,* and the scenes from *Boris* went off well and met with favour. Borodin's B-minor Symphony, performed at the Third Concert, went well, too. Its Scherzo was taken in the right tempo, thanks to the fact that Borodin had made a number of corrections and had largely done away with the piling up of brasses. Borodin and I had given a good deal of thought to it this time; by then our craze for brass instruments had waned, and the Symphony gained much from our corrections.

At the Fourth Concert, a rather serious mishap occurred. The pianist Klimoff was to play Liszt's E flat major Concerto; but he missed the rehearsal and decided to play unrehearsed; I was so imprudent as to give my consent. At the concert, Klimoff grew nervous and confused,—it was impossible to follow him. During the piano-pauses, when it was easy to regain self-composure, he would inopportunely begin to second the orchestra or nod to it, indicating wrong entrances. Thus in the opening of the Scherzo, after the triangle solo, he played the orchestra's entrance a bar too soon, putting everybody off; the confusion lasted to the very end of the number. The performance was a disgrace, the orchestra was at odds with the pianist from first to last. My mortification was unbounded, and I literally cried for chagrin and shame on reaching home after the concert.

Throughout the winter and the spring, Cui, Borodin, Lyadoff and I went back from time to time to composing *Táti-táti.* Our collection of pieces accumulated. I believe the last numbers composed were Lyadoff's gallop and my tarantella. That was in June, 1879, at the summer home in Ligovo, where we had gone as in the previous year.

In midwinter, I went to Moscow for a fortnight's stay, to conduct the orchestra in Shostakovski's concerts. An excellent pianist, Pyotr Adamovich Shostakovski (a pupil of the renowned Kullak), had been invited to a professorship at the Moscow Conservatory several years before, but had soon found himself at odds with its Director, N. G. Rubinstein, and had been obliged to leave. What the differences had been about, I do

not know exactly. According to Shostakovski's account, the cause lay in the alleged fact that Nikolay Rubinstein could not bear near him a pianist of equal powers and would not permit him an appearance at any concert of the Russian Musical Society. How much truth there is in this, it is impossible to say. But the fact is that Shostakovski left the Conservatory and turned to giving private lessons; soon, however, he established a piano-school of his own, and later even some new musical society under the name Philharmonic. During the season of 1878–79 he brought me over to conduct the orchestra, first, at his own concert at the Grand Theatre, and, secondly, at the concert of the Philharmonic Society at the Hall of the Club of the Nobility. Besides this, he had brought over to participate in these concerts the singer, D. M. Lyeonova, who had left the St. Petersburg Opera stage some years previously. Lyeonova was long past her youth, but she still had a voice.

Of my own orchestral works, I gave the overture to *Pskovityanka* and, I believe, the *Serbian Fantasy,* at Shostakovski's concert. At the concert of the Philharmonic Society, I performed *Sadko,* Balakireff's overture to *King Lear,* and other things. The concerts were crowded, and my pieces won applause; *Sadko* was even encored. The greatest animosity prevailed between Shostakovski and the Russian Musical Society, and my participation in Shostakovski's concerts was, evidently, a thorn in the side of the Moscow Conservatory and the Musical Society. However, friendly artistic relations grew up between Shostakovski and myself. He promised to come to St. Petersburg to play at the Free Music School; and I promised to come to him the following year. Thus I established, for the first time, a musical contact with Moscow, where my name had been all but unknown thus far; of my compositions, my Third Symphony had been the only one given, and that in a single performance, (in 1875, if I am not mistaken), N. G. Rubinstein conducting. I must say, by the way, that P. I. Chaykovski had at that time been music critic on one of the Moscow dailies and had written a very sympathetic review of my Symphony. On my present visit to Moscow I did not meet Pyotr Ilyich, as he was not at Moscow. At all events, by that time he had given up for good his activity as reviewer. There was then talk aplenty

about Chaykovski's queer marriage. He had married a person who was ill-suited to him, and shortly (in a month or two) the couple had parted for good.[1] Presently there were rumours that he was mentally or nervously ill; however, immediately afterwards, there came complete recovery. Nevertheless in those days he shunned friends, went nowhere and never visited St. Petersburg except in the strictest incognito.

My trip to Moscow left a pleasant impression with me. On returning to St. Petersburg, I went back to my regular work.

In the summer of 1879 two persons—one Tatishcheff and a certain Korvin-Kryukovski—made their bow to St. Petersburg. They came to me, to Borodin, Musorgski, Lyadoff, Napravnik and several other composers with the following proposition. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the reign of His Imperial Majesty Alyeksandr Nikolayevich (Alexander II) was to occur in 1880. For that occasion they had written a grand scenic production, consisting of a dialogue between the *Genius of Russia* and *History,* and this was to be accompanied by tableaux meant to represent various moments of that reign. For the proposed solemn performance the Messrs. Tatishcheff and Korvin-Kryukovski had obtained permission from the proper authorities; they now turned to us with the plan that we compose orchestral music in keeping with the subject-matter of the living pictures. It must be admitted that the personalities of these gentlemen, who had lived in Paris till then, appeared somewhat odd; their mode of conversation as well as their manners recalled Bobchinski and Dobchinski.[2] The dialogue between the Genius of Russia and His-

[1] Chaykovski's marriage remains a tragic and mysterious episode in this composer's life. His biographers refer to it in veiled and suppressed whispers. Mrs. Newmarch writes that Kashkin thinks that Chaykovski kept his engagement secret from his friends for some time. Kashkin met the newly married couple at a party given in their honour at the Jurgensons'. This was the only time he ever saw them together. Chaykovski continued to attend to his work at the Conservatory, but his friends observed a change in him. He had become reserved and absent-minded and seemed anxious to avoid intimate conversation. As time went on, this marriage and its tragic consequences were regarded as an amusing comedy by outsiders, and his intimate friends knew few of the real facts. Kashkin was filled with the gravest apprehensions, which proved not to be groundless. Chaykovski afterwards admitted that he had tried in many ways to end his life. Once he had gone so far as to stand in the river, with the water up to his chest, on a frosty September night, hoping to catch a fatal cold and to get rid of his troubles without scandal. C. V. V.

[2] The comic pair of cronies with one mind and two tongues, in Gogol's famous *Revizor* (Inspector General). J. A. J.

tory was bombastic to a degree. Still the moments for living pictures had been selected happily and gratefully for music; and we consented to write it. Thus were composed, partly during that season and partly during the next, my chorus *Slava* (Glory!), on the theme of a Christmas Carol; Borodin's *In Central Asia* (subsequently a very popular piece); Musorgski's march, *The Capture of Kars;*[1] Napravnik's—I don't remember the name; and Zike's *The Black Sea.* Musorgski's March was taken bodily from the music to Gedeonoff's *Mlada,* where it had done duty as the March of the Princes; its trio in oriental style (on some Kurdish theme) was newly written. Subsequently this March was named simply *March, with trio, alla turca.* Our compositions, including the splendid picture *In Central Asia,* were written rapidly, but Messrs. Tatishcheff and Korvin-Kryukovski (whom Lyadoff usually called Razdyeri-Rukava, i. e. Rip-Sleeves, for fun) vanished no one knew where, and the question of producing the performance of their invention was dropped. Thus this scheme came to naught; only the above enumerated pieces remained, and were performed subsequently at concerts in St. Petersburg; the tableau, *In Central Asia,* was given rather frequently even abroad. This work took the fancy of Liszt, to whom Borodin had shown it during one of his trips abroad. Lazy and procrastinating Lyadoff had not done his share.

In the summer of 1879, we lived at Ligovo at Mme. Lapotnikova's summer-place, just as we had done the year before. I conceived the idea of writing a large orchestral work of fantastic nature, to Pushkin's prologue to his *Ruslan and Lyudmila "Oo lookomorya doob zelyony,"* (At the curved shore a green-clad oak). I began, and by the end of the summer had a goodly part of it ready in sketch form. In addition, I composed a string quartet on Russian themes; this I subsequently worked over into a sinfonietta for the orchestra. Its separate movements bore the titles: I. In the field. II. At the Charivari. III. In the *Khorovod* (Round dance and song). IV. Near the Cloister. The last movement, which did not go into the Sinfonietta after all, was written on a church theme, commonly sung at Te Deums (*Pryepodobny otche imya ryek, moli Boga za nas*—

[1] A stronghold in the Caucasus taken from the Turks in 1877 after a long siege. J. A. J.

Reverend father so and so, pray God for us!) in imitational style. This quartet of mine never had a public performance. Once I took it over to K. Y. Davydoff and asked to have it played at a quartet rehearsal. Davydoff, Auer, Pikkel and Veykman played it for me. It did not please them much; and I found many shortcomings in it myself. The first movement was monotonous, having been written on a single theme; the Scherzo had no coda, while the Finale was dry; I did not venture to let the public hear my quartet.

Before going away for the summer, I induced Borodin to allow me to copy personally and put in some work on polishing up the chorus and the parts of the *goodochniki* (rebec-players) in the scene at Vladimir Galitski's house in *Prince Igor.* This scene he had composed and written down rather long ago, yet it was in utter disorder; some things were to be abridged, others were to be transposed into other keys, here and there the choral parts were to be written, etc. Meanwhile the work had not progressed; he was preparing, could not make up his mind, put things off from day to day,—and the opera did not move. It distressed me extremely. I was yearning to aid him; I proposed myself as musical secretary to him,—provided his wonderful opera derived some gain from it. After frequent refusals on his part and urgings on my part, Borodin consented, and I took the above-mentioned scene with me to my summer home.

We were to correspond about the work referred to. I began my labour and really accomplished something. I wrote Borodin a letter about certain doubts that had arisen, but received no letter for a long time. Finally an answer came, saying that he preferred to talk the whole matter over in the autumn. Thus the affair ended; and the scene had made only slight progress.

For several years now the Borodins had been going for the summer to Central Russia, in the Toola Government principally, I believe. At their summer home they lived queerly. Usually they rented it unseen. As a rule their summer home consisted of a roomy peasant-*izba* (hut). They would bring but few belongings. They had no hearth-plate; cooking was done in a Russian oven. Apparently their mode of living was extremely uncomfortable, in crowded quarters, with all sorts of privations. The ever-sickly Yekatyerina Sergeyevna, went barefoot all summer

long, for some reason. But the chief discomfort of this sort of life lay in the absence of a piano. Borodin's summer leisure was in any event hardly productive, if not utterly barren. Always harassed by his official duties and all sorts of outside affairs during the winter, he could do very little work on his music; then came summer, and with it leisure, and yet work was impossible all the same, owing to the discomforts of this way of living. In this strange manner life shaped itself for Borodin, and yet what could have seemed more propitious for work than a situation like his: alone with his wife, and a wife, too, who loved him, who understood and valued his enormous talent?

CHAPTER XVI

1879–80

Production of *May Night,* Opinions about it. Concerts of the Free Music School. Balakireff. Lyeonova and Musorgski. My second visit to Moscow. Beginning of *Snyegoorochka.* Krooshevski. Sasha Glazunoff.

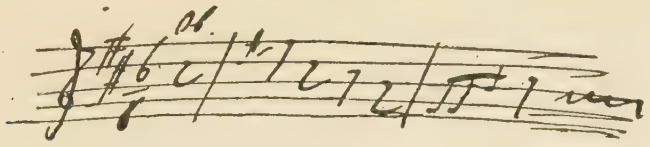
Soon after returning from the country I showed Balakireff the beginning of *Skazka* (Fairy-tale) which I had ready. Although he liked certain parts of it, he did not approve the work as a whole; the form conceived by me was not to his liking, nor did he like the very opening itself. All this made me cool toward *Fairy-tale;* I barely refrained from tearing up what I had composed; in any event, I abandoned the idea of continuing the composition. Soon my thoughts wandered to my overture on Russian themes that I had written as far back as 1866. I was seized with the desire to revise it, and began gradually to ponder its revision and re-orchestration. The work came to its end as late as the spring of 1880, when the thought of a new opera was already possessing me; but of this I shall speak later.

In October, rehearsals of *May Night* began at the Mariinski Theatre. The rôles were distributed as follows: Lyevko—Kommissarzhevski, Hanna—Slavina and Kamyenskaya, Svoyachenitsa (Sister-in-law)—Bichoorina, Mayor—Koryakin and Stravinski, Kalenik—Myel'nikoff and Pryanishnikoff, Vinokur (Wine-distiller)—Ende, Scrivener—Sobolyeff, Pannochka—Vyelinskaya. (Already in those days two performers were cast for certain rôles). Rehearsals got along well; everybody tried his best; I invariably accompanied all rehearsals myself. Napravnik was reserved, but was attentive and accurate as usual. The chorus sang well. For the ballet I had to put together the *violon répétiteur* part of the dances of the nymphs; owing to certain complexities of the music,

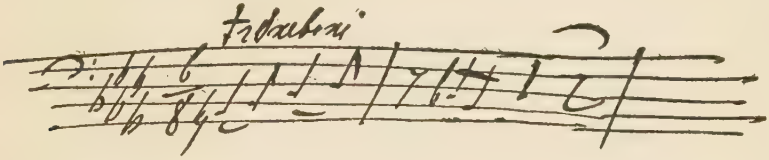
this was rather hard to do. I went to see the ballet-master Bogdanoff, played him the dances and told him my wishes in the matter. In due course orchestra rehearsals, too, began. As far as I recall, all was ready in December. The scenery, too, was ready. This scenery was made over from the investiture on hand for Chaykovski's *Kooznyets Vakoola* (Vakoola the Smith) which had been taken off the boards, with the sole difference that winter was turned into summer. Owing, however, to various causes and shortcomings that seemed bound to occur in our Directorate's productions of operas, *May Night* did not have its première until January 9, 1880. It had considerable success. The song about the Mayor, as well as Lyevko's song (A-major) were demanded over and over again. There were many curtain calls for the artists and myself. Ende (wine-distiller) and Sobolyeff (scrivener) were very comical. Bichoorina (sister-in-law) was excellent and delivered her rapid-fire talk furiously. The others were all fair; with the exception of Kalenik's rôle which suited Myel'nikoff poorly, and Vyelinskaya, who occasionally, as was her wont, sang off key. The ballet was poor. The scenery of Act III had been bungled, so the fantastic scene went badly. The general verdict of the artists was as follows: the first two acts were very good; the third, somewhat lacking; the Finale, they said, bad, bad altogether. Yet I was convinced that Act III contained the finest music and many scenico-poetic moments, the best being (1) two verses of Lyevko's song "*Oy ty myesyats yasny*" (O, thou bright moon!), after which the window in the master's house opens, Pannochka's head appears, and her call is heard, accompanied by the harp glissando; (2) Pannochka's leave-taking of Lyevko and her disappearance. This latter disappearance lost in particular in the performance: Pannochka did not disappear, but simply walked off; the sunrise was gloomy and overcast, and the fantastic scene as a whole was carried through rudely and tastelessly. That season my opera was given eight times. Toward the last, Napravnik had already made cuts in Act III, the principal cut being the first game of "raven" [1] (B-minor). Through this omission the scene did not gain, it lost. First, Gogol was distorted; second, the sense was lost, as Lyevko was given no choice in recognizing the stepmother; third, the mu-

[1] Game—The mother covers the children, the raven seizes them. J. A. J.

sical form was the loser too, and the author's intention destroyed completely, as the game, the first time, is founded on the simple theme:



while the second time, when the stepmother plays, this theme is combined with the stepmother's phrase:



which adds the ominous character so appropriate here. I felt provoked at these *"cots"* (Napravnik's pronunciation),[1] but what was to be done? The success of *May Night* at the later performances lapsed somewhat, but the house was filled nevertheless. When I recall the production of *The Maid of Pskov,* I cannot help admitting that my first opera achieved greater and more lasting success than the second. The next season *May Night* drew less well; and the next after that,—still less. The receipts were fair, but hardly more than that. During the subsequent seasons some of the artists were changed. Lyevko was sung by Lodi and later by Vasilyeff III; after Ende died, Vinokur's part was sung by Vasilyeff II. The performances grew more and more slipshod, and after eighteen representations (in three years, I believe) interest in the opera cooled, and it was stricken from the repertory.

At its première, my opera pleased our circle more or less, but not much in general. Balakireff liked it but little. V. V. Stasoff was pleased alone with the fantastic scene and the game of "raven" above all; he made much ado about it and extolled it, giving a deal of approval also to the *khorovod* of the nymphs of which the principal ideas were borrowed from the *Mlada khorovod* (*kolo* [2]) which both Stasoff and Musorgski had liked even in former

[1] Napravnik, a Chekh, pronounced kupira (with German umlaut) instead of kupyura (from French coupure)—cut. J. A. J.

[2] Kolo (wheel, circle, ring-dance) is the equivalent of khorovod with the Western and Southern Slavs. J. A. J.

years. They also liked moderately Pannochka's singing with the harps, suggestions of which, too, had existed in *Mlada,* and which was therefore not unfamiliar to them. But Lyevko's songs, the nymph's chorus, etc. they cared for very little. At that time Musorgski had grown cold to other people's music in general, and was cooler than before to the *khorovod.* He frowned a little, and said of *May Night* as a whole that it had somehow missed the mark. Apparently my newly sprung tendency toward cantabile and rounded forms found little favour with them all; besides, I had so frightened all of them with my study of counterpoint that I was looked upon with some prejudice. Praise me, they did, but their former "fine! incomparable! capital!"—were no longer heard. Cui wrote an extremely cold review, setting forth that my themes and phrases were *puny* throughout, and that the best of them were borrowed from the peasant-folk. His wife once met me at Bessel's and said with venom: "Now you have learned how to write operas," alluding to the decent measure of success that *May Night* then enjoyed with the public. I shall mention in passing that about that time, Cui, in his articles, lavished praise on Napravnik as well as on Davydoff, but belittled Chaykovski as much as he could. Taken all in all, the critics handled my *May Night* rather roughly caviling at everything and perceiving no good points at all. Of course, all this helped cool the public, as I have mentioned above. On the whole, *Pskovityanka* had received more praise, more censure and more success than *May Night.*

In 1879–80 I arranged again four subscription concerts of the Free Music School at Kononoff's Hall. The programs were again miscellaneous, and were made up under strong pressure from Balakireff. Among others of the non-Russian numbers were given Beethoven's Sixth Symphony and music to *Egmont;* Liszt's music to *Prometheus;* Moszkowski's Symphony *Jeanne d'Arc,* and excerpts from Berlioz's *Les Troyens.* Of Russian numbers there were: Introduction to Act III, the song of the wandering pilgrims, the entrance of the Tsar's hunting party, the storm and the song of the girls from my *Pskovityanka* (second version), as well as the cradle song from the *Prologue* and the closing chorus and Ivan Grozny's cavatina (sung by I. P. Pryanishinkoff) from the same. From *Igor* were given: Yaroslavna's Lament, Vladimir Galitski's song, Yaroslavna's scene with the girls,—this time

all orchestrated by Borodin himself. But the excerpts from *Khovanshchina* performed at the Second Concert, were not all orchestrated by the composer. The chorus of *Stryeltsy* (archers) and Marfa's song were from his pen entirely; but the dance of the Persian girls were orchestrated by me. Though he had promised this number for the concert, Musorgski dilly-dallied, and I volunteered to orchestrate it. He assented at the first hint, and, at the performance, was quite pleased with my work, although I had made many corrections in his harmonies and part-writing. An amusing thing occurred in connection with the program of the Fourth Concert. A. Lyadoff's *Scherzo* in D-major was to have its first performance, but the author, whom laziness was beginning to overcome, had had no time to finish it. Something had to take its place. At that time I was occasionally visited by one Sandow, an Englishman by birth, still very young, who had studied in Leipzic and now lived in St. Petersburg, where he gave music lessons. He used to bring me his orchestral compositions; very dry and involved, most of them. By chance he had once brought me a Scherzo and asked me to perform it at one of the concerts. I had declined. Later I recalled his request and, now, proposed to him to put *his* Scherzo instead of Lyadoff's, on the program. And that was done. After the performance the author was called before the curtain, though the Scherzo was colourless and full of petty bustle. I was assured later that he had been called out through error, as the name Sandow had been taken as a misprint for Lyadoff, whose name was held in high esteem.

Thus, owing to the wish for the performance at the concerts of the School of a greater number of pieces from the pens of contemporary Russian composers of talent, such as Borodin, Musorgski or Lyadoff, one ran up against their insufficient activity, now orchestrating for them and now extracting compositions from them by any and every means, fair and foul. There was no need of applying such measures to Cui and Balakireff; moreover, at that time, the former composed nothing but songs, while the latter composed nothing at all. Still, Balakireff was, at the time, beginning more and more to resume musical activity and to advance, albeit very sluggishly, his *Tamara* which had remained at a standstill since the 60's. He had yielded to the importunate pleas of L. I. Shestakova, when he turned back to it. During the

year described he even made one appearance at a rehearsal of a concert of the Free Music School (the first after a long lapse of time), when I was preparing his Overture on Russian themes (B-minor). But he did not behave in a manner very pleasant to me; he was irritable, now loudly scolding the violinists who had struck a snag, now pointing out to me the true motions and methods of a conductor,—an act altogether out of place at a rehearsal, in the presence of the whole orchestra.

Of soloists, at the School Concerts that year, in addition to some opera singers, we had also Shostakovski, who played Liszt's E flat major Concerto (given successfully) and D. M. Lyeonova who sang excerpts from *Khovanshchina.* But if Liszt's Concerto went off safely this time, the beginning of one of the excerpts from Berlioz's *Les Troyens* did not. This number was begun disgracefully owing to the orchestra's constant chattering and inattention, despite my lifted bâton. P. A. Krasnokootski, the concert-master, was to blame, more than any of them. After a bar or two had been played, we had to stop and make a fresh start. However, this incident remained unobserved somehow by both audience and critics; but I felt grieved and angry, of course.

Lyeonova, who had travelled to Japan, now lived in St. Petersburg, giving lessons in singing. She arranged these lessons in great style, establishing a sort of small music school. Lyeonova was a talented artist, who had once had a fine contralto voice; but in reality she had never had any training, and was, therefore, hardly capable of teaching the technique of song. Occasionally something of the gipsy rang in her own singing. Yet in dramatic and in comic pieces she was often inimitable. And in this regard, of course, she could be of use to her pupils. For beginners, however, this was insufficient, and, accordingly, of all her many pupils, only the tenor Donskoy, subsequently an artist of the Moscow Opera, gained prominence. Thus her instruction consisted mainly of coaching in songs and excerpts from operas. An accompanist and musician was needed who could supervise the correct rehearsing of the pieces, a thing that Lyeonova herself could not do. Musorgski found himself filling the post for her. At that time he had been long on the retired list, and was in need of funds. Lyeonova's classes furnished him some means of existence. He gave rather much of his time to instruction in these classes, teaching as

he did even elementary theory and composing some trios and quartets with horrible part-writing, as exercises for Lyeonova's pupils.

Lyeonova was very fond of talking of herself, her merits and her pre-eminence. By that time her voice had grown quite worn; still quite unaware of it, she would proudly relate how this or that artist or famous person was constantly going into raptures over her voice, which, according to her, grew stronger and more voluminous with years. She related that a plaster cast of her throat sent to Paris had called forth universal astonishment there. According to her, the only true school of singing was to be found in her classes; she asserted that contemporary artists did not know how to sing, that things had been better in olden days, etc., the usual patter on the lips of aging artists. Lyeonova's husband, one Gridnin, who had once written a play, managed the advertising and business end of the cantatrice's activity. Among others, concerts with Lyeonova's participation were arranged in the Merchants' Club; I was to conduct the orchestra. Only the first concert of the scheduled series took place. I do not remember the whole program. As I recall it, it contained *Kamarinskaya;* Laura's song (Mme. Klebek); Marfa's song from *Khovanshchina* (Lyeonova); *Wonderful Dream* (Ditto), etc. Everything ran smoothly.

Musorgski's association was an advertisement for Lyeonova to a certain degree. His function in her classes was, of course, unenviable; still, he was or, at least, tried to be unconscious of that. Work at the composition of *Khovanshchina* and *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka* flagged somewhat in those days. In order to speed the completion of *Khovanshchina* and bring some manner of satisfactory order into the ill-joined and complicated scenario he abridged a good deal in his opera; thus, for instance, the scene in the German Suburb disappeared altogether, while many details were merely basted together. In *The Fair at Sorochintsy,* too, there was something queer going on: the publisher, Bernard, undertook to issue excerpts of it for the piano, agreeing to pay Musorgski a small compensation for the privilege. Being in need, Musorgski concocted in haste for Bernard various numbers from his opera for the piano, two-hands, although he had neither a real libretto, a detailed scenario, nor rough sketches with vocal parts. Musorgski had really finished only Khivrya's song and Parasya's song, as well as the scene of Afanasi Ivanovich and Khivrya. In those

days he also wrote many songs (principally on texts by Count Golyenishcheff-Kootoozoff) which remained unpublished.

I shall run somewhat ahead. Lyeonova undertook a concert-tour to Southern Russia in the summer of 1880. Musorgski went with her in the double rôle of accompanist and participant in her concerts as pianist. Though a fine pianist in early youth, Modest Petrovich never worked on his piano-technique and had no repertory whatsoever. Lately he had frequently appeared at concerts in St. Petersburg as accompanist for singers. Men and women singers were very fond of him and prized his accompaniments. He followed the voice finely, accompanying at sight, without rehearsals. But going on tour with Lyeonova he had to appear as piano-soloist. This time his repertory was queer, indeed; thus, at concerts in the provinces, he played the introduction to *Ruslan and Lyudmila* in an improvised arrangement, or the bell-tolling from his *Boris*. With Lyeonova he toured many towns of Southern Russia, visiting even the Crimea. Under the impression of the natural beauties of its southern coast he wrote two minor piano pieces—*Goorzoof* and *On the Southern Coast;* slightly felicitous, these pieces were published by Bernard on Musorgski's return. I recall besides, that he played at our house a rather long and quite absurd fantasy that was to depict a storm on the Black Sea. This fantasy, after all, remained unrecorded, and was lost forever.

In the spring of 1880 I went to Moscow for the second time, to lead the orchestra in Shostakovski's concert. Of my compositions, I believe, I performed the *Overture on Russian Themes,* revised just then, and the Overture to *May Night.* I recollect that the rehearsals were slipshod and disorderly. Towards the end of the first rehearsal I wanted to go over my Russian Overture once more, but the musicians told me very politely that it was time for them to go, that they had already sat an extra half hour expressly for my sake and would have left much earlier, had I not been I. It turned out that at Moscow rehearsals usually lasted only two hours and not three, as at St. Petersburg; yet Shostakovski had told me that I had three hours at my disposal. All this was very little to my liking; I began to be disillusioned in Shostakovski in general. I saw that he was not an artist, but a man striving after effect and courting self-advertisement. The date of the concert coincided with the day of Solovyoff's attempt on the life of the Tsar,

and I had to play *Bozhe Tsarya khrani* (God save the Tsar!) four times in succession. Some military man demanded that the hymn be performed once more, but I did not do it. Then, with threats and demands for an explanation, he tried to get at me over the stage; to my delight, however, the theatre authorities prevented his doing so. During this trip I visited A. N. Ostrovski in Moscow in the following connection.

In the winter I had conceived the idea of composing an opera on the subject and words of Ostrovski's *Snyegoorochka* (Snow-maiden). I had first read *Snyegoorochka* in 1874 or thereabouts, when it had just appeared in print. At that reading I had liked it but little; the kingdom of the Byeryendyeys had appeared queer to me. Why? Were the ideas of the 60's still alive in me, or did the demands, current in the 70's, that subject matter be taken from so-called *life,* hold me in their grip? Or had Musorgski's naturalism carried me away on its current? Probably all three together. In a word, Ostrovski's wonderful, poetic fairy-tale had made no impression on me. During the winter of 1879–80, when I re-read *Snyegoorochka,* its wonderful, poetic beauty had become apparent to me. At once I conceived a longing to write an opera on the subject; and the more I pondered my intention, the more enamoured I felt of Ostrovski's fairy-tale. My warmth towards ancient Russian custom and pagan pantheism, which had manifested itself little by little, now blazed forth in a bright flame. There was no better theme in the world for me, there were no finer poetic figures for me than Snyegoorochka, Lyel' or Vyesna (Spring); there was no better kingdom than the kingdom of the Byeryendyeys with their wonderful ruler; there was no better view of world and religion than the worship of Yarilo-Sun. Immediately upon reading it (in February, as I recall) there began to come to my mind motives, themes, chord-passages, and there began to glimmer before me fleetingly at first, but more and more clearly later, the moods and clang-tints corresponding to the various moments of the subject. I got a thick book of music paper, and began to jot it all down in the form of rough notes. With these thoughts I went to Moscow to Shostakovski and visited Ostrovski to obtain his permission to make use of his work as a libretto, with authorization to make changes and cuts that might be necessary. A. N. Ostrovski received me very amiably, gave me author-

ization to handle his drama as I saw fit, and presented me with a copy of it.

On my return from Moscow, the whole spring was consumed in preliminary work and thinking over the opera in its individual elements; by summer I had quite a considerable number of sketches accumulated.

Among the compositions I wrote or finished during this season must be set down the chorus *Slava* (Glory!), a Christmas Carol (January), referred to earlier in my reminiscences of the past season.

Of my Conservatory pupils there graduated this season E. A. Krooshevski (subsequently active at the Imperial Russian Opera), an excellent pianist, an exceedingly capable and gifted musician as regards ear and quickness of perception, but exceedingly dry as a composer. However, he later wisely abandoned the field of composition in exclusive favour of the path of conducting. Disdaining neither time nor place, he sought to acquire the art of conducting, accompanied on the piano, conducted in the summer at Oranienbaum, at Dyemidoff's Garden, etc. Accordingly, he developed after a time into an excellent technician, and when called to the Imperial Russian Opera, he proved at once a finished leader.

During this season Balakireff sent me several pupils in the theory of music. Usually theory proved only elementary theory. All these ladies and gentlemen studied scales, intervals, etc. under me at Balakireff's behest, but really took slight interest in the subject. Theory got along somehow; but in solfeggio the case was bad. My pupils belonged for the most part to the families of the Botkins and the Glazunoffs. Casually, Balakireff once brought me the composition of a 14 or 15 year old high school student, Sasha Glazunoff. It was an orchestral score written in childish fashion. The boy's talent was indubitably clear. Shortly afterwards (in the season of 1879–80) Balakireff introduced him that he might take up studies under me. While giving lessons in elementary theory to his mother Yelyena Pavlovna Glazunova, I began also to teach the youthful Sasha. He was a charming boy with beautiful eyes, who played the piano very clumsily; N. N. Yelyenkovski taught him piano playing. Elementary theory and solfeggio proved unnecessary for him, as he had a superior ear, and Yelyenkovski had covered harmony also with him to a certain extent.

After a few lessons in harmony I took him directly into counterpoint to which he applied himself zealously. Besides, he always showed me his improvisations and jotted down fragments or minor pieces. Thus work at counterpoint and composition went on simultaneously. In moments of leisure, Sasha Glazunoff played a great deal and on his own initiative constantly acquainted himself with musical literature. At that time he was particularly fond of Liszt. His musical development progressed not by the day, but literally by the hour. From the very beginning of our lessons, my relations with Sasha, from mere acquaintanceship and the attitude of teacher to pupil, began to turn gradually into friendship, despite the disparity in our ages. Balakireff, at that time, also took considerable interest in Sasha's development, playing much to him and discussing with him, thereby doubtless attaching the responsive youth to himself. Nevertheless, a few years later, their relations grew cooler, drier; frankness between them vanished, and finally a complete break came; but of this I shall speak later.

CHAPTER XVII

1880–81

The summer at Stelyovo. Composing *Snyegoorochka.* Completion of *Skazka* (Fairy-tale). Analysis of *Snyegoorochka.*

Spring came. It was time to look for a summer home. Our nurse, Avdotya Larionovna, called our attention to the estate Stelyovo, owned by Marianoff, some twenty miles beyond Looga; there she had lived before she came to care for our children. I went to look over Stelyovo. Though old, the house was comfortable; a fine, large, shady garden with fruit trees, and genuine country wilds. According to the terms of agreement, we could be complete masters of the estate during the summer. We rented the summer home and moved there on May 18th.

For the first time in my life I had the opportunity of spending the summer in a genuine Russian village. Here everything was to my liking, everything delighted me. A picturesque location, charming groves ("Zakaznitsa" and the Podberyezye grove), a big forest, Volchinyets, fields of rye, buckwheat, flax and even wheat, a multitude of scattered villages, a small river, where we bathed, a large lake Vryevo, nearby, impenetrable roads, solitude, antique Russian names of villages, like Kanyezerye, Podberyezye, Kopytyets, Dremyach, Tyetyerevino, Khvoshnya, etc., everything threw me into raptures. The excellent garden with a multitude of cherry trees and apple trees, currants, wild and garden strawberries, gooseberries, lilacs in bloom, an infinity of field flowers and the incessant singing of birds, everything was somehow in peculiar harmony with my pantheistic frame of mind at the time and my passion for the subject of *Snyegoorochka.* A thick crooked knot or stump overgrown with moss, appeared to me the wood demon or his abode; the forest Volchinyets—a forbidden forest; the bare Kopytyets hillock —Yarilo's mountain; the triple echo heard from our balcony—

seemed voices of wood sprites or other supernatural beings. The summer was sultry and dense with thunder storms. From mid-June until mid-August, thunder storms and heat lightning occurred well-nigh daily. On June 23, the day of Agrafyena Koopal'nitsa, lightning struck the earth near our very house, and my wife, who sat at the window, was knocked down, armchair and all, by the concussion. She was unhurt, but badly frightened and for long afterwards under a peculiar nervous strain during thunder storms, which she now came to dread, though formerly fond of them. She trembled and wept at the glare of the lightning and the peals of thunder. This state lasted for a month or so; only then her nerves began to calm, and she again reacted to thunder storms as before, without nervous dread. Despite this, Nadyezhda Nikolayevna liked Stelyovo very much, and the children had a fine time, too. We were monarchs of all we surveyed—not a neighbour anywhere. We had at our disposal cows, horses, carriages and the little scrawny peasant Osip with his family, who took care of the estate; all were at our service.

On the first day of settling at Stelyovo I began working on *Snyegoorochka.* I composed every day and all day; yet I managed to do much walking with my wife, helped her make preserves, gather mushrooms, etc. But musical thoughts and their fashioning pursued me persistently. There was a piano, old, broken and tuned a whole tone too low. I used to call it "piano in B-flat"; nevertheless I contrived to extemporize on it, and to try out what I had composed. I have said already that toward the summer I had enough musical material accumulated for the opera—themes, motives, chord-successions, beginnings of individual numbers; the moods and contours of separate moments of the opera were outlining themselves in my conception. All of this was partly jotted down in the thick book, partly kept in my head. I turned to the beginning of the opera and jotted it down in orchestral score approximately up to and including Vyesna's (Spring's) aria. But soon I noticed that my fancy tended to outstrip the rapidity with which I wrote the score. Moreover, from a certain insufficiency in the co-ordination of the whole, there resulted defects in the score. Accordingly, I abandoned this method, formerly applied to a considerable extent in *May Night,* and began to write *Snyegoorochka* in a rough draft for voices and piano. Both composing

and recording what I composed went very fast, now in the order of act and scene, and now by leaps, running ahead. Having formed the habit of superscribing the date on completing nearly each piece of the rough draft, I give them below:

June:

1. Introduction to Prologue.
2. Recitative and aria of Vyesna (Spring).
3. Continuation up to the dance of the birds.
4. Song and dance of the birds.
17. Continuation to Snyegoorochka's aria.
18. Snyegoorochka's aria, etc. up to Butter-week.
20. Seeing out of Butter-week.
21. End of Prologue.
25. First song of Lyel'.
26. Introduction to Act I; second song of Lyel' and little chorus.
27. Scene of Snyegoorochka up to Lyel's songs.
28. Wedding ceremony.

July:

2. Procession of the tsar and hymn of the Byeryendyeys.
3. The heralds' call.
4. The scene of the wedding ceremony as well as the scene of the kiss from Act III.
6. The recitative and dance of the *skomorokhs* (merry andrews).
7. Introduction to Act III, *khorovod* and song about the beaver.
8. Continuation and the tsar's second cavatina.
9. Scene of the kiss (continuation).
10. Scene of Snyegoorochka, Koopava and Lyel' (Act III).
11. Postlude in B-major and Snyegoorochka's arioso.
12. Chorus of flowers (Act IV).
13. Vyesna sinks into the lake.
15. Duet of Mizgir and Snyegoorochka (Act IV).
17. Finale of Act I.
21. Chorus of *gooslyars* (dulcimer-players).
22. Judgment scene up to Snyegoorochka's entrance (Act II); the tsar's first cavatina, etc. up to the final chorus.
23. Snyegoorochka's entrance. (Act II).

August:

2-3. Scene of Snyegoorochka and Mizgir.
5. Recitative in presence of the heralds (Act II).

7. Act I, after wedding ceremony to the finale.
9. Scene of Snyegoorochka and Vyesna (Act IV).
11. Chorus *Proso* (millet) and the thawing of Snyegoorochka.
12. Closing chorus.

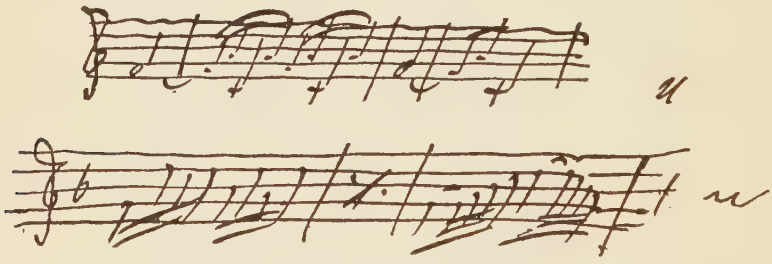
The entire sketch of the opera was finished August 12th. In the intervals where the dates are not consecutive, evidently details were thought out, and the numbers, missing in the above list, were composed. No previous composition had ever come to me with such ease and rapidity as *Snyegoorochka.*

After completing the sketch in the latter part of August, I took up the *Skazka* (Fairy-tale) for orchestra, which I had begun the previous summer; I finished and instrumentated it. About October 1, with the entire rough draft of *Snyegoorochka* and the orchestral score of *Fairy-tale* completed, the family and I removed to St. Petersburg; after that I spent also some time at Tayitsy, the summer home of Vl. Fyod. Purgold. Soon, however, life at St. Petersburg began to run in its usual order, the Conservatory, Free Music School, Naval Bands and all.

My principal work during the season of 1880–81 was the orchestration of *Snyegoorochka.* I began September 7, and finished March 26, 1881. The score contained 606 closely written pages This time I employed an orchestra larger than the one in *May Night.* I imposed no particular limitations on myself. The four French horns were chromatic, the two trumpets—likewise; a piccolo flute was used apart from two flutes; the tuba was added to the trombones; from time to time the English horn and the bass clarinet appeared. Even here I did not dispense with the piano, as I needed an imitation of the *goosli* (dulcimer),—a method bequeathed by Glinka. My familiarity with wind-instruments, acquired in the navy bands, did me good service. The *Snyegoorochka* orchestra is, as it were, the *Ruslan* orchestra perfected,—in the sense of using chromatic-scale brass. I carefully strove not to drown the singers; as it turned out later, I acheived this, except in the song of Dyed Moroz (Grandfather Frost) and Mizgir's last recitative, where the orchestra had to be subdued.

In making a general review of the music of *Snyegoorochka,* I must say that in this opera I made considerable use of folk-tunes, borrowing them principally from my *Collection.* In the following

moments of the opera, the themes have been borrowed from folk-songs: *Oryol voyevoda, pyerepyel podyachi* (Eagle—the commander-in-chief, quail—the court clerk)—in the dance of the birds; *Vyeselyeñko tebya vstryechat' privyechat'* (A joy to meet thee, to greet thee)—in the seeing out of Butter-week; the initial melody (the first four bars) and the immediately following theme of the oboe—in the wedding ceremony; the song *Ay vo polye lipyeñka* (Oh the dear little linden tree in the field!), the theme *Koopalsya bobyor* (The beaver was bathing), and lastly the chorus *Proso* (millet). In addition to this, many minor motives or tunelets, the component parts of more or less long melodies have undoubtedly been borrowed by me from similar little tunes in various folk-melodies that I did not introduce into the opera in their entirety. Such are certain little motives of the seeing out of Butter-week, some phrases of Bobyl' and Bobylikha; Mizgir's phrase: *Da, chto ya strashen, to pravdu ty skazala* (That I am dreadful, indeed you've told the truth!), etc. The motives of a pastoral character:

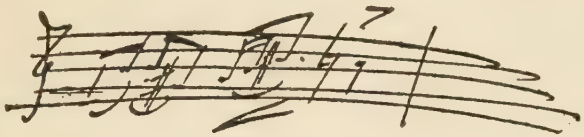


are also of folk origin. The second motive A. K. Lyadoff had communicated to me, the first I remembered from my own childhood.

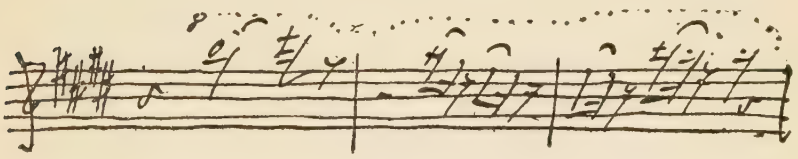
The motive: *Maslyenitsa mokrokhvostka, poyezzhay doloy so dvora* (Wet-tailed Butter-week be off the courtyard!) is a scoffingly sacrilegious reminder of the orthodox mass for the dead. But the melodies of ancient orthodox canticles, are they not of ancient pagan origin? Are not many rites and dogmas of like origin? The holidays of Easter, Trinity Sunday, etc., are not they adaptations of Christianity from the pagan sun cult? And the doctrine of Trinity? For all this cf. Afanasyeff.[1]

[1] Afanasyeff was the first scientific collector and editor of Russian Fairy-tales. His essays on the mythology of the Slavs (especially his: *The Slav's Poetic Views of Nature*) is probably what R. K. refers to. J. A. J.

The tune of the heralds' call I remembered from my childhood: a horseman, equipped by the Monastery, would ride through the streets of Tikhvin and call in a stentorian voice: "Aunties, mothers, fair maidens, please come to rake hay for the Mother of God!" (The wonder-working ikon of our Lady of Tikhvin was in the Church of the Great Friary which owned hay meadows on the bank of the Tikhvinka River). Some songlets of birds (cuckoo, the cry of the young merlin, etc.) were borrowed for the dance of the birds. In the introduction, the cock-crow is also genuine and was given me by my wife.



One of the motives of Spring (in the Prologue and Act IV):



is the altogether accurately reproduced song of a bull-finch which had lived rather long in our cage; only that our dear little bull-finch sang it in F sharp major, while I took it a tone lower for the convenience of the violin harmonics. Thus, in obedience to my pantheistic frame of mind, I had hearkened to the voices of folk creation and of nature, and what they had sung and suggested I made the basis of my creative art,—and for so doing I subsequently incurred not a few reproaches. The music critics, having noticed both in *Snyegoorochka* and *May Night,* two or three melodies borrowed from collections of folksongs (to notice many they were powerless, as they were ill-acquainted with folk creation), proclaimed me incapable of creating my own melodies; at every opportunity, they kept stubbornly repeating this opinion of theirs, despite the fact that my operas contain by far more melodies that belong to me and have never been drawn from song collections. Many melodies that I had successfully composed in folk spirit, like all three songs of Lyel', they considered borrowed and they used

them as material evidence of my reprehensible conduct as composer. Once I even lost my temper over a sally of this sort. Soon after the production of *Snyegoorochka* on the occasion of somebody's singing the Third Song of Lyel', M. M. Ivanoff [1] made the remark in print, as if casually, that this piece had been written on a folk-theme. I countered with a letter to the editor requesting him to point out the folk-theme from which the melody of Lyel's Third Song had been borrowed. Of course no such statement was forthcoming. As for creating melodies in the folk spirit, mine must beyond a doubt contain snatches and turns which are contained and scattered in various genuine folk melodies. Can two things resemble each other as a whole, if no component part of the one resembles any component part of the other? The question there is: if no single particle of a created melody resembles any single particle of a genuine folksong, can the whole created melody recall folk creation?

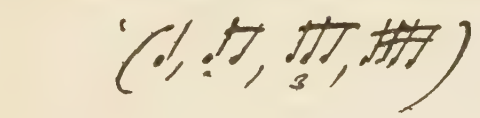
As for making use of brief motives such as the shepherds' tunes given above, the songs of birds, etc. does that stamp a composer as only of scanty fancy? Surely the value of the cuckoo's cry or of the three notes played by the shepherd is not the same as the value of the song and dance of the birds, of the Introduction to Act I, of the March of the Byeryendyeys in Act IV, is it? In the pieces mentioned, had not enough sweep and activity been left to the composer's fancy? The working up of folk-themes and motives had been bequeathed to posterity by Glinka in his *Ruslan, Kamarinskaya,* the Spanish overtures, and partly in *A Life for the Tsar* (The song of the Looga driver, the figuration accompaniment to the melody: *Tooda zavyol ya vas*—Thither I've led you). Or shall we accuse Glinka, too, of poverty of melodic inventiveness?

Of my former sketches for Gedeonoff's *Mlada* only two elements were taken into *Snyegoorochka:* Mizgir's soaring motive *O, skazhi, skazhi mnye, molvi odno slovo* (O, tell me, tell me, say but one word!) and the harmonic base of the motive of the glowworm. All other musical material sprang up entirely in the course of composing *Snyegoorochka.*

[1] Music critic (of *Novoye Vremya*), author of *A History of Russian Music* (in 2 volumes, 1910–1912, at Petersburg; biased), and composer (operas, symphonic works, etc.) J. A. J.

As in the course of composing *May Night* [the first khorovod *Proso* (millet), the songs of the approaching chorus in Act III], the ancient modes continued to interest me in *Snyegoorochka.* Lyel's first song, some parts of the seeing out of Butter-week, the call of the heralds, the hymn of the Byeryendyeys, the khorovod *Ay vo polye lipyeñka* (Oh the dear little linden tree in the field!) are written in the ancient modes or with ancient cadences, principally the degrees II, III, and V (the so-called Dorian, Phrygian and Mixolydian modes). Certain sections, such as the song about the beaver with Bobyl's dance, are written with transition into different keys and different modes. The striving for modes pursued me also subsequently throughout my whole activity as composer, and I doubt not that like the other composers of the Russian school, I have achieved something new in this field; while the most recent working up of ancient modes in West European music flashes only in individual and rare cases: Liszt's *Todtentanz* variations, Berlioz's *Nubian Dance,* etc. [1]

In comparison with *May Night* I wooed counterpoint much less in *Snyegoorochka;* yet, on the other hand, in the latter opera I felt still greater freedom than in the former, in the field of both counterpoint and figuration. I believe that the fugato of the growing forest (in Act III) with the ever-varying theme



as well as the four-part fugato of the chorus *Nye byl ni razoo porugan izmyenoyu* (Never once been defamed with betrayal), together with Koopaya's lament, furnish good examples of this.

In respect to harmony, I succeeded in inventing some new things; like the chord of six whole-tone notes of the scale, or of two augmented triads, when the wood-sprite embraces Mizgir (in theory it is hard to find a name for it),—by the way, sufficiently expressive of the given moment; or the use of the exclusively major triads and the dominant chord of the second (also with a major triad above) almost through the whole length of the final hymn to Yarilo-Sun

[1] The Russians opened this field to Debussy and the other modern Frenchmen. C. V. V.

in 11/4, and this lends the chorus an especially bright, sunny colouring.

I have made wide use of leading motives (Leitmotive) in *Snyegoorochka.* At the time I knew little of Wagner and whatever I did know, I knew superficially. Nevertheless the employment of Leitmotive is present in *Pskovityanka, May Night* and particularly in *Snyegoorochka.* No doubt my use of leading motives is different from Wagner's. With him, they serve as the material from which the orchestral fabric is woven. In addition to this latter use, with me the Leitmotive appear also in the singing voices, and often they are component parts of a more or less lengthy theme, as for example in the principal melody of Snyegoorochka herself, and likewise the theme of Tsar Byeryendyey. Sometimes the leading motives are truly rhythmico-melodic motives, but occasionally they are mere harmonic successions; in such cases they might rather be called *leit-harmonies.* Such leading harmonies are not as easily perceptible to audiences as the Wagnerian leading motives which recall rough military signals. And the ability to grasp harmonic successions is given only to a fine and trained musical ear, that is, a more subtle understanding. Among the leit-harmonies most perceptible from the first must be numbered the characteristic augmented fourth G-C sharp in stopped French horns *ff,* which reappear with each new miraculous apparition in the fantastic scene of Mizgir's roamings in the forbidden forest.

In *Snyegoorochka* I succeeded in giving full freedom to an easy-flowing recitative and that, too, so accompanied, that in the majority of cases, the delivery of the recitative is possible *a piacere.* I remember how happy I was when I succeeded in writing the first real recitative in my life—Vyesna's (Spring's) address to the birds, before the dance. In the vocal field, too, *Snyegoorochka* represented a considerable stride forward on my part. All vocal parts proved to have been written conveniently and within the natural range of voices; some moments of the opera are even grateful and effective for performance, like the Songs of Lyel' and the Tsar's cavatina. Characterization of the *dramatis personæ* was in evidence, too; in this respect one cannot help mentioning the duet of Koopava and Tsar Byeryendyey.

In the orchestration I never manifested any tendency toward freakish effects that the musical foundation of the composition itself

did not call for; I always have preferred simple means. Undoubtedly, the orchestration of *Snyegoorochka* meant with me a step forward in many respects; force of sonority for example. Until then I had nowhere succeeded in reaching such tonal power and splendour as in the final chorus, or such succulence, velvetiness and fulness as in the D flat major melody of the scene of the kiss. I was successful in some new effects like the tremolo of three flutes in chords on the Tsar's words *Na rozovoy zarye, v vyenkye zelyonom* (At roseate dawn, in a green wreath). In general, I had always been inclined to more or less individualization of separate instruments. In this sense, *Snyegoorochka* abounds in all manner of instrumental solos, for both wind and string instruments, in purely orchestral moments and in accompaniment to the singing. Solos for violin, cello, flute, oboe and clarinet occur very frequently in it, especially solos for the clarinet (then my favourite instrument in the wind group), and this gives the clarinet a very responsible part in this opera. In Act IV of the opera, in the March of the Byeryendyeys on the stage, I made use of a separate small orchestra of wood-winds, to represent, as it were, the shepherds' horns and reed-pipes. Subsequently, however, in the new edition of the score, I did away with it, owing to the impractibility of this device.

The forms of *Snyegoorochka* partly follow the Glinka traditions, that is they represent separate finished numbers (mainly in songs); partly they are passagelike, fused as in Wagner (mainly in the Prologue and Act IV), but maintaining a certain architectonic plan which is manifested in consequent repetitions of certain portions, and in modulatory devices.

When completing *Snyegoorochka* I felt a fully matured musician and operatic composer who had finally come to stand on his own feet. Nobody knew anything of my composing *Snyegoorochka,* as I had kept the matter a secret; when, on my arrival in St. Petersburg, I announced to my close friends that the sketch had been completed, I greatly astonished them. As far as I recall, early in the fall I showed my opera to Balakireff, Borodin and Stasoff, playing and singing the entire *Snyegoorochka* for them, from cover to cover. All three were pleased, but each in his own way. Stasoff and Balakireff were gratified chiefly with the folk-life and fantastic portions of the opera; however, neither of the two understood the hymn to Yarilo. Borodin, on the other hand, seemed

to appreciate *Snyegoorochka* in its entirety. Curious that even in this case Balakireff could not curb his passion for meddling, demanding that I transpose the initial Introduction into the key of B-minor, but this I refused to do. By transposing in this manner I should have deprived myself of the natural harmonics and open strings of the violins; besides, the themes of descending Spring, in that case, would be in B-major (cellos and French horns) and not in A-major with which Spring was indissolubly linked in my imagination. However, after a little scolding, Balakireff this time forgave me and kept praising *Snyegoorochka,* assuring me that once, when he had played at home the seeing out of Butterweek, his elderly servant Marya could not resist and began to dance to it. However, this was slight consolation to me, and I should have preferred Balakireff to appreciate the poetical nature of the girl Snyegoorochka, the comic and good-natured fineness of Tsar Byeryendyey, etc. Anatoli was enraptured by my opera; as for Musorgski, who became acquainted with excerpts of it and somehow displayed no interest for the whole, he lightly praised a few things, and then remained totally indifferent to the composition as a whole. And it could not have been otherwise. On the one hand, his fastuous self-conceit and conviction that the path he had chosen in art was the only true path; on the other hand, complete decline, alcoholism, and, as a result, an ever-befogged mind.

CHAPTER XVIII

1881–82

Skazka (Fairy-tale). Concert of the Free Music School. Death of Musorgski. Resignation from directorship of the Free Music School. Trip to the South. Concerts of the Russian Musical Society. Production of *Snyegoorochka.* The critics. Balakireff's return to the Free Music School. Glazunoff's First Symphony. Our circle. Work on *Khovanshchina.* Visit to Moscow. Acquaintanceship with M. P. Byelyayeff. *Noch' na Lysoy Gorye* (A Night on Bald Mount). Concerto for the piano. *Tamara.*

While making up the programs of the Russian Musical Society, Napravnik addressed an inquiry to me—as to which of my compositions I should like to hear performed at these concerts. I indicated the recently written *Skazka* (Fairy-tale) and gave the score to Napravnik. Shortly afterwards, the latter proposed that I conduct the piece myself. I consented. At one of the earlier concerts of that season, the *Fairy-tale* was placed on the program. I conducted. The performance would have been quite successful, if the concert-master Pikkel (then growing morbidly nervous) had not jumped out, without any reason, at the entrance of the violins *divisi* toward the end of the piece and had not by so doing confused the other violinists. However, the violins speedily recovered, and the mistake had hardly been noticed by the audience. Save for this episode, I was pleased with the performance as well as with the piece itself, which sounded colourful and brilliant. In general *Skazka* undoubtedly recalls in style *Snyegoorochka,* as having been composed simultaneously with it. Strange that to this day the hearers grasp with difficulty the true meaning of the *Fairy-tale's* program: they seek in it a chained-up tom-cat walking around an oak tree, and all the fairy-tale episodes which were jotted down by Pushkin in the prologue to his *Ruslan and Lyudmila* and which served as the starting point for my *Fairy-tale.* In his brief

enumeration of the elements of the Russian fairy-tale epos that made up the stories of the miraculous tom-cat, Pushkin says:

"One fairy-tale I do recall,
I'll tell it now to one and all,"

and then narrates the fairy-tale of *Ruslan and Lyudmila.* But I narrate my own musical fairy-tale. By my very narrating the musical fairy-tale and quoting Pushkin's prologue I show that my fairy-tale is, in the first place, Russian, and secondly, magical, as if it were one of the miraculous tom-cat's fairy-tales that I had overheard and retained in my memory. Yet I had not at all set out to depict in it all that Pushkin had jotted down in the prologue, any more than he puts all of it into his fairy-tale of *Ruslan.* Let everyone seek in my fairy-tale only the episodes that may appear before his imagination, but let him not insist that I include everything enumerated in Pushkin's prologue. The endeavour to discern, in my fairy-tale, the tom-cat that had related this same fairy-tale—is groundless, to say the least. The two above quoted verses of Pushkin are printed in italics in the program of my *Fairy-tale,* to distinguish them from the other verses, and direct thereby the auditor's attention to them. But this has been understood neither by the audiences nor by critics, who have interpreted my *Skazka* in all ways crooked and awry and who, in my time, as usual, of course, did not approve of it. On the whole, however, the *Fairy-tale* won sufficient success with the public.

During the season of 1880–81, I visited Moscow for the third time for Shostakovski, at whose concert I conducted. Four concerts of the Free Music School were announced for that season at the Hall of the Municipal Credit Society. The proposed programs of these four concerts I do not recall now; of these only the first concert February 3, 1881, took place, the assisting artists being Cross and Stravinski. The latter sang Schumann's *Der Schlafende Ritter,* orchestrated by A. R. Bernhard (though his orchestration was considerably rewritten by me) and Dargomyzhski's *Paladin* with A. K. Lyadoff's instrumentation. Of orchestral pieces I gave *Antar* and Berlioz's *Carnaval Romain*—both successfully. Of choral pieces Musorgski's *Rout of Sennacherib* was performed. The author was present at the concert and came out in response to calls from the audience.

This concert was the last at which a composition of Musorgski's was performed within his lifetime. A month or so later he was taken to the Land Hospital owing to a fit of delirium tremens. Dr. L. B. Bertenson had placed him there and was attending him. On learning of the misfortune that had befallen Musorgski, we—Borodin, Stasoff, myself and many others—began to visit the patient. He was visited also by my wife and her sister, Mme. A. N. Molas. He was frightfully feeble, had greatly changed and had turned grey. Rejoicing at our visits, he occasionally talked with us altogether normally; yet suddenly he would pass into a mad delirium. Thus things went for some time; at last, at night, March 6th, he died, apparently from paralysis of the heart. His powerful organism proved to have been completely undermined by alcohol. On the day before his death we, all his closest friends, sat long at his bedside talking with him. As is well-known, he was buried at the Alyeksandr Nyevski Monastery.[1] V. V. Stasoff and I attended to much of the dreary business in connection with his funeral.

On Musorgski's death all his manuscripts and sketches were brought in a mass to me that I might set them in order, complete and prepare them for publication. During Musorgski's last illness, at V. V. Stasoff's insistence and with the composer's consent, T. I. Filippoff was chosen and confirmed his executor with the purpose that, in the event of his death, there might be no delay nor hindrance in the publishing of his works,—on the part of relatives of the deceased. Musorgski's brother Filaret Petrovich was still living; there was sparse information about him; his attitude toward the fate of Modest Petrovich's compositions could not be known,—accordingly, the best thing to do was to choose an executor from among the disinterested admirers of the composer. T. I. Filippoff was the very man. He made an agreement with Bessel's firm to which he handed over Musorgski's work for publication, the firm, in its turn, binding itself to do it in full within the shortest time possible. The publishing house paid nothing in return. For my part, I undertook to set in order and complete all of Musorgski's works and turn over gratis to the Bessel firm those that I should find suitable for the purpose. For the next year and a half or two years my work on my dead friend's compositions went on. The following

[1] Dostoyevski, Chaykovski, and Rubinstein are also buried here. C. V. V.

compositions were among his remains: *Khovanshchina,* still incomplete and unorchestrated (with slight exceptions); sketches of certain parts of *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka* (The Fair at Sorochintsy—the songs of Khivrya and Parasya had been published separately; a good many songs, the most recent and some of the old ones—all finished; the choruses *The Rout of Sennacherib, Joshua,* the chorus from *Œpidus,* the maidens' chorus from *Salammbô; A Night on Bald Mount* in several versions; for orchestra—Scherzo in B flat major, Intermezzo in B-minor and the March (trio alla turca) in A sharp major, various records of songs; juvenile sketches and the Sonata Allegro in C-major of ancient days. All these were in exceedingly imperfect order; there occurred absurd, incoherent harmonies, ugly part-writing, now strikingly illogical modulation, now depressing absence of any at all, ill-chosen instrumentation of orchestrated pieces, in general a certain audacious self-conceited dilettantism, at times moments of technical dexterity and skill but more often—of utter technical impotence. Withal, in the majority of cases, these compositions showed so much talent, so much originality, offered so much that was new and alive, that their publication was a positive obligation. But publication without a skilful hand to put them in order would have had no sense save a biographico-historical one. If Musorgski's compositions are destined to live unfaded for fifty years after their author's death, (when all his works will become the property of any and every publisher) such an archæologically accurate edition will always be possible, as the manuscripts went to the Public Library on leaving me. For the present, though, there was need of an edition for performances, for practical artistic purposes, for making his colossal talent known, and not for the mere studying of his personality and artistic sins. Of my work on *Khovanshchina* and *A Night on Bald Mount* I shall speak a while later, in due course; concerning the rest I consider sufficient what I have just said. I shall add only that, with the exception of sketches that proved utterly useless, all these works have been looked over, re-orchestrated, arranged for the piano by me and copied in my own hand, and handed over, as soon as ready, to Bessel's where they were printed under my editorship and with my proof-reading.

Of the Free Music School concerts, only the first, as I have said, took place, the other three had to be cancelled owing to the assas-

sination of Emperor Alyeksandr Nikolayevich (Alexander II).[1] On Emperor Alexander III mounting the throne, new appointments came in the administrative world. I. A. Vsyevolozhski was appointed Director of Theatres.[2] I made it known to the Directorate that I had *Snyegoorochka* ready in my possession. I made Napravnik and the artists acquainted with my opera by playing it through for them in the foyer of the Mariinski Theatre. All of them, in general, timidly approved the opera. Napravnik hemmed and hawed for a long time, but said in the end that, owing to the absence of dramatic action, this was a "dead" opera and could not be successful; however, he had nothing against its being produced. The opera was accepted, for production the following season, by the Director who manifestedly aimed to make a showing with a fine production early in his management. The publishing rights were sold to Bessel; the piano scores were being engraved; the orchestral score was printed lithographically, the parts were copied by the Directorate. In the spring the chorus rehearsals began.

Balakireff's constant meddling and pressure in the affairs of the Free Music School had become intolerable to me by that time. It seemed to me, and true it was—that he was eager to become its head himself. In addition to everything, I was extremely busy with Musorgski's compositions, work in connection with the production of *Snyegoorochka* was looming, and I therefore decided to resign the Directorship of the Free School, of course giving lack of time as the only reason for my resignation. At first, Balakireff slightly bristled up at me, saying that my action was forcing him, so to speak, to take hold of the School. I expressed the opinion that that would be a very desirable result. Immediately the Free Music School voted me an address of thanks and turned to Balakireff. He consented, and thenceforth returned to the ranks of the active musical army, for some years to come.

The following summer my family went to a villa at Tayitsy, where they lived with P. F. Purgold, the Ashkharumoffs and the Molas family; while I went to Nikolayeff under orders from the

[1] March 1, 1881. J. A. J.

[2] The Management of the Mariinski Theatre was connected with that of five other theatres: the Alexander Theatre, where Russian dramas and comedies were given; the Mikhaylovski Theatre, reserved for French plays; the Grand Opera House; and two theatres in Moscow. C V. V.

Navy Department. The object of my trip, according to the request of the Nikolayeff port authorities, was to review the Black Sea port naval band that I had transformed from brass into a mixed band seven years earlier. This band I found in satisfactory order; its playing was correct. At Nikolayeff I met with a cordial reception on the part of the Nyebol'sin family. As on the first occasion, I was again given quarters at the so-called palace on the bank of the Ingul. A concert was scheduled to be given under my direction in one of the city parks. Among other pieces, I arranged this time (for a wind band) the entire conspiracy scene from *Les Huguenots.* I also placed on the program several pieces from the repertory of my Cronstadt concerts. Zealous rehearsals began, two a day. Choristers, too, participated in the concerts, though they were not numerous enough to vie with the wind band. Finally the concert took place successfully, and then its repetition. By this time Nadyezhda Nikolayevna had arrived; and having finished my business with the music of the Navy Department, I left with her for Crimea via Odessa.

We put up at the *Hotel Russia* in Yalta,[1] and made all manner of excursions and trips along the Southern coast. Numerous acquaintances turned up at Yalta: Sofiya Vladimirovna Fortunato (V. V. Stasoff's daughter) and family—she managed the Hotel Russia; P. A. Blaramberg and wife; Mme. Syerova, and (unexpected meeting!), P. A. Zelyony (the quondam commander of the clipper *Almaz*) and wife. Once the whole company went on a picnic to Yayla, we also being of the party. At the Fortunato house we formed an acquaintance with the family of Anastasyeffs, proprietors of a small estate at Magarach; we also made them a visit and, with them, went to see the Nikitski Garden. That day is memorable to me, because in the evening, on our return trip from Anastasyeffs, the oldest Fortunato boy entered our carriage, near Ay-Danil with his chum, Fyeliks, Mikhaylovich Blumenfeld, a youth of eighteen or so, whom he there introduced to us. Our charming new acquaintance proved to be a lively pianist of promise, a bountifully endowed musical temperament. For several days we kept meeting him constantly at the Fortunatos', in the *Hotel Russia.* There was a fine grand piano in the hotel drawing-room and more than once, for my Yalta friends, I had to play excerpts

[1] The most fashionable of the Crimean bathing-resorts. C. V. V.

from *Snyegoorochka* which interested everybody at the time. Fyeliks seemed to listen with delight.

From Yalta we went by carriage to Simfyeropol and Syevastopol, via Alooshta and Chatyrdag. We boarded a steamer at Syevastopol and sailed to Constantinople, where we stayed three days. Our return trip lay through Odessa. In crossing the Black Sea we passed through a great storm. For auld lang syne, I was not seasick at all. On the way North we visited Kiyeff, and returning to St. Petersburg, spent the remainder of the summer at Tayitsy.

During the summer of 1881 I composed nothing. My work consisted only of some arrangements for brass bands (those I had made at Nikolayeff for the concert) and in reading proof of the orchestral score of *Snyegoorochka,* then being lithographed. After removing to St. Petersburg, my principal occupation during the season of 1881–82 was with Musorgski's compositions, on which there was work enough.

The Free Music School was now under Balakireff's direction; at the Russian Musical Society the following episode occurred. In one of the newspapers, (the *St. Petersburg Gazette,* I believe) there appeared an article by N. F. Solovyoff (already a professor at the Conservatory) attacking the activity of Napravnik as conductor of the symphony concerts of the Russian Musical Society. Having read through this article, E. F. Napravnik considered it necessary flatly to resign his conductorship of the Russian Musical Society concerts. The concerts were left conductorless. The Directors proposed to K. Y. Davydoff that he assume the vacant office. As if yielding to entreaties, Davydoff consented; as a matter of fact, of course, he was overjoyed. Since (judging by gossip) intrigue was supposed to have played a considerable part in the whole episode, and since the orchestra itself apparently felt hostile, owing to the removal of the former leader, K. Y. felt very timid about his first appearance, fearing some demonstration of protest. He, therefore, thought it expedient to turn to me as a person who was an outsider to the suspected intrigue; he requested me to open the concert with my *Overture on Russian Themes;* after that, the audience, having grown a bit accustomed to the fact that a new person had supplanted Napravnik, might be expected to treat as calmly the appearance of Davydoff himself at the conductor's desk. This reasoning was correct; either that or else all those

"suppositions" had been figments of Davydoff's imagination alone. I conducted my overture safely, and presently the entire concert, too, went off safely. K. Y. led the concerts till the end of the season.

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In December, orchestral rehearsals of *Snyegoorochka* began. By then Napravnik had successfully insisted on many cuts in the opera. With difficulty I managed to maintain Butter-week and the Chorus of Flowers intact. Snyegoorochka's arietta (G-minor) in Act I, Koopava's arietta, the Tsar's second cavatina *Ookhodil dyen vesyoly* (The merry day is waning!) and many other bits, a bit here, a bit there, throughout the opera were remorselessly cut. The finale also of Act I was disfigured. What was to be done! One had to grin and bear it. For there was no written agreement wherein the management had pledged itself to make no cuts. The scenery was ready, the music had been copied at the management's expense; and, lastly, where else could the opera be given if not at the Imperial Theatre? For the first time in my life I had to face the question of cuts. *The Maid of Pskov* and *May Night* are short operas; there had been no talk of cuts at their production. The cuts in *May Night* were made after the first performance. *Snyegoorochka* is a long opera, indeed, and intermissions, too, are long, according to the traditions of the Imperial Theatres. It was said that the profits of the refreshment room had something to do with the length of the intermissions; on the other hand, to carry the performance beyond midnight is against custom, So it was a case of butting a stone wall![1]

The parts in my opera were distributed as follows: Snyegoorochka—Vyelinskaya, Spring—Kamyenskaya, Koopava—Makarova, Lyel'—the talented Bichoorina, Byeryendyey—Vasilyeff III, Mizgir—Pryanishnikoff, Moroz (Frost)—Stravinski, Bermyata—Koryakin, etc. Everybody sang with a will. Myel'nikoff, who, too, had the part of Mizgir assigned to him, declined it for some reason. At vocal rehearsals I accompanied personally; one of the rehearsals I even carried through independently and quite

[1] Still more cuts were made in this score at the performance at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, in 1922, under the direction of Artur Bodanzky. C. V. V.

without Napravnik. The latter, as usual, was magnificent at orchestral rehearsals in the weeding out of errors, but exacting and cold—at the general rehearsals.

Nadyezhda Nikolayevna was with me at rehearsals rather frequently; she was in prime health, although in the last days of pregnancy. On the night of January 13th, after she had attended one of the final rehearsals, our son Volodya was born.

Snyegoorochka had its première January 29th. Nadyezhda Nikolayevna, who had not left her bed, was in despair that she was destined not to witness the first performance of my opera. I, too, felt out of sorts over the matter; I even took too much wine at dinner, and came to the première gloomy and indifferent to all that was going on. I stayed persistently behind the scenes, trudging only, from time to time, to the stage-manager's room; I never heard my opera at all. Nor did I come out in response to calls for me. The opera was a success. I was presented with a wreath.

By the second performance, Nadyezhda Nikolayevna had recovered and had left her bed. Taking all possible precautions, she came to the opera house. My spirits leaped. The opera continued to please; but still another cut was made; at the instance of Pryanishnikoff, who was eager to close Act III with the scene of Mizgir, in order to make a bid for applause, the closing trio (Koopava, Snyegoorochka and Lyel') was done away with, and the Act closed with Mizgir. Yet Pryanishnikoff gained no more applause than before. Best of all the audiences liked Byeryendyey's cavatina and the third song of Lyel'. They were usually encored, while Lyel's song was given even three times. Occasionally also the hymn of the Byeryendyeys, Lyel's first song and Snyegoorochka's aria in the prologue were demanded again. These encores and the interminable intermissions (the intermission before Act IV lasted from 35 to 40 minutes) dragged the opera out until nearly midnight.

As had been their wont, the critics treated *Snyegoorochka* with scant sympathy. Reproaches for my lack of dramatic action, for the poverty of melodic inventiveness which manifested itself in my partiality for borrowing folk-tunes, reproaches for insufficient originality in general, admissions that I "possessed talent" as a symphonist, but not as an operatic composer,—all those showered down on me in the newspaper reviews. Nor did Cui lag behind

the others, trying his best as he did, not to praise my opera, and still keep within bounds of decency. Resort was also had to the reviewers' trite trick of belittling a present work at the expense of previous ones which, in their time, had been hounded no less. It is remarkable, however, that Cui, who treated my compositions with such discretion (as if approving with reservations), treated Napravnik's works with warmth, attention and delight. The critics' reviews irritated me little, as in former days; perhaps I felt most provoked at Cui.

After a long interval, Balakireff re-appeared as conductor of an orchestra at the first concert of the Free Music School, leading Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. As conductor, he now appeared to me entirely different from what he had before. The former fascination had gone forever for me. With the audience he won applause as one returned to activity.

The sixteen-year-old Sasha Glazunoff, who had been developing hourly, not daily, had by then completed his First Symphony in E-major (dedicated to me). On March 17th, it was played under Balakireff's leadership at the Second Concert of the Free Music School. That was truly a day of rejoicing for all of us, the St. Petersburg active workers of the Young Russian School. Youthful in inspiration, but mature in technique and form, the symphony reaped great success. Stasoff rumbled and grumbled full blast. The audience was astonished when the composer, in a "Gymnasium" (College) uniform, appeared in response to calls for him. I. A. Pomazanski presented him with a wreath bearing the curious inscription: "To Alyeksandr Glazunoff—Herman and Kazyenyoff." Herman [1] and Kazyenyoff were the well-known conjurors then performing in St. Petersburg. On the part of the critics some fuss and froth was naturally unavoidable. There appeared also caricatures representing Glazunoff as a suckling babe. Gossip kept busily spinning assurances that the symphony had not been written by him at all, but had been ordered by his wealthy parents from "everybody knows whom," etc., etc., to the same effect. This symphony was the first of a series of original compositions by the highly-gifted artist and indefatigable worker, compositions which gradually spread also to Western Europe and

[1] Herman the Great (the Elder) known in the United States. J. A. J.

A. K. GLAZUNOFF *from a drawing by* V. A. SYEROFF

came to be the finest adornments of contemporary musical literature.

At the same concert my *Sadko* was played as the closing number. This time Balakireff simply made a fiasco of it. In passing to Movement II he indicated the change of tempo a bar too soon. Some instruments came in, others did not. An unimaginable mess resulted. From that time on, Balakireff abandoned his rule of conducting always from memory. At this season's concerts of the Free Music School there appeared the young talented pianist Lavroff, and there flitted by, too, like a pale shadow, the Moscow pianist Myel'goonof, a dry theoretician, and compiler of a barbarous collection of Russian songs. At that time Balakireff fussed over him like a child over a new toy.

In the autumn of 1881, our new friend F. M. Blumenfeld came to St. Petersburg and entered the Conservatory under Prof. Stein.

The personnel of the circle that visited our house was approximately as follows: Borodin, Lyadoff, V. V. Stasoff, Glazunoff, Blumenfeld, the talented baritone singer Ilyinski, whom I have referred to before, and Ilyinski's wife. About the same time there began to appear in our circle M. M. Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, who had been graduated in the class of theory of composition, a pupil of mine, who promised to develop into a talented composer; shortly afterwards he married the singer V. M. Zarudnaya (an excellent soprano). Both husband and wife became professors at the Moscow Conservatory a number of years later. Cui hardly visited our circle at all, keeping quite by himself. Balakireff came very rarely. He would come in, play something and leave at an early hour. After his departure, everybody breathed more freely; a lively conversation began, new or recently conceived compositions were played, etc. During the last years, besides Ippolitoff-Ivanoff, there graduated, from my class of the Conservatory, A. S. Aryenski and G. A. Kazachenko; the former—subsequently our well-known talented composer, the latter—a composer and chorus master of the Imperial Russian Opera. During my work on *Snyegoorochka,* these two pupils of mine kindly aided me in making the arrangement of my opera for the piano and voices. I shall say by the way that Aryenski, when still a pupil in my class, composed—partly as volunteer work and partly as class assignment—

several numbers of *Voyevoda*[1] (*Son na Volgye*—Dream on the Volga) after Ostrovski; these later formed part of his opera on this subject. I vividly recall his playing, in the class room, of the scene at the bridge, the cradle song, etc.

In the interim between work on Musorgski's compositions I somewhat re-orchestrated the overture and entr'actes to the drama *Pskovityanka,* changing the natural-scale to chromatic-scale French horns and trumpets. These numbers I had excluded from the second version of *The Maid of Pskov* because, on the one hand, I had no hope of having this opera produced, while, on the other hand, I had been dissatisfied with the second version. In the first version I had suffered from insufficient knowledge, in the second —from superabundance of knowledge and inability to direct it. I felt that the later version had to be abridged and worked over once more; that the right, desirable form of *Pskovityanka* lay somewhere midway between the first version and the second; and that, for the time being, I was incapable of striking that form.— Yet, the instrumental numbers of the opera of the later version were interesting. Therefore I treated them in the above manner. The result was a composition in the style of the entr'actes to *Prince Kholmski* or *Egmont.*

The summer of 1882 we spent again at dear Stelyovo. The weather was fine as a rule, but there were frequent rain-storms. Now all my time was consumed by work on *Khovanshchina.* Much had to be altered, abridged and added. In Acts I and II there turned up much that was superfluous, musically ugly and a drag to the scene. In Act V, on the contrary, much was lacking altogether, while a good deal existed only in the roughest of rough draft records. The chorus of *raskol'niks* (schismatics) with the strokes of the bell, prior to the self-immolation, written by the composer in barbarous empty fourths and fifths, I recast entirely, as its original form was impossible. For the closing chorus there existed only the melody (recorded from the mouths of some schismatics by Karmalina and by her communicated to Musorgski). Availing myself of the given melody I composed the entire chorus from beginning to end, but the orchestral figure (of the pyre blazing up) was entirely my own. For one of Dosifey's

[1] Chaykovski had written an opera to this libretto fourteen years previously, but subsequently destroyed the score. C. V. V.

monologues in Act V, I borrowed music from Act I bodily. The variations of Marfa's song in Act III as well as the chorus *"Pryeryekokhom i pryepryekhom!"* (We disputed and we argued!) were considerably changed and worked out by me. I have said already that Musorgski, so often unrestrained and wanton in his modulations, occasionally ran to the other extreme: he could not struggle out of his one tonality for a long time, thus throwing the composition into utter languidness and monotony. In this case, in the latter half of Act III, from the moment of the court-clerk's entrance, he clung tenaciously to the key of E flat minor to the end of the Act. That was intolerable and with no reason whatever, as the whole section undoubtedly subdivides itself into two parts—the scene of the court-clerk and the *stryel'tsy's* (Strelitz's) appeal to old Khovanski. The first part I left in E flat minor as in the original, the other I transposed to D-minor. The result both answered the purpose better and offered greater variety. The parts of the opera that the composer had instrumentated I re-orchestrated and, I hope, for the better. All the rest was instrumentated by me, too; I, again, made the arrangement (for the piano). By the end of the summer the entire work on *Khovanshchina* could not be finished and I wrote the last of it in St. Petersburg. [1]

Before removing to St. Petersburg I had composed music for Pushkin's *Anchar,* [2] for basso. I was not quite satisfied with the composition and it lay in utter obscurity until 1897.

In the latter part of the summer, my wife and I made a trip to Moscow for a fortnight or so. There was an All-Russian Exposition at that time in Moscow, at which there were planned, among other things, symphonic concerts in the name of the Moscow Directorate of the Russian Musical Society. Owing to the death of N. G. Rubinstein, N. A. Hubert filled the post of Director of the Conservatory. Having undertaken to arrange the Exposition concerts, he invited me to conduct two of them. An exclusively Russian program was desired. I assented to this plan. Thus

[1] For the production of this opera in Paris and London in 1913, Maurice Ravel orchestrated the reading of the ukases, the hymn to Prince Ivan Khovanski, the duet between Emma and young Khovanski in the first act, Marfa's song, and Kooz'ka's song with chorus, after Musorgski's autograph sketches in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg. C. V. V.

[2] The Upas Tree. C. V. V.

there came about my trip to Moscow from Stelyovo. At the two concerts under my direction, there were given, among other things (I cannot recall them all), *Antar,* Glazunoff's First Symphony, excerpts from *Prince Igor* (sung by Stravinski), the aria *I zhar i znoy*—Both heat and ardour, (Bichoorina), Chaykovski's piano-concerto (Lavroff) and Napravnik's piano-fantasy on Russian themes (Timanova). All went well and scored success. Sasha Glazunoff also came expressly for these concerts. Before the rehearsal of the Symphony commenced, I was approached by a tall and handsome man with whom I was not acquainted, though I had run across him in St. Petersburg. He introduced himself as Mitrofan Petrovich Byelyayeff and requested permission to attend all rehearsals. M. P. Byelyayeff was an ardent music-lover, who had been completely captivated by Glazunoff's Symphony at its first performance at the Free Music School and who had come now expressly for its sake to Moscow. From that moment dates my acquaintance with this remarkable man who subsequently was of such enormous consequence to Russian music.

S. N. Krooglikoff (formerly active in the Free School) who had settled in Moscow some two years earlier did not forsake Glazunoff and me during our entire sojourn in Moscow. Glazunoff, Krooglikoff, Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and I passed our time quite pleasantly, dividing it among rehearsals, the sights of the Exposition and walks through Moscow. Gratified with our trip, we returned to Stelyovo, where, during our absence, our children had been taken care of by my mother and my wife's brother, Nikolay Nikolayevich,—the two living with us all summer.[1]

During the season of 1882–83 I continued working on *Khovanshchina* and other compositions of Musorgski's. *A Night on Bald Mount* was the only thing I could not find my way with. Originally composed in the 60's, under the influence of Liszt's *Todtentanz,*—for the piano with accompaniment of orchestra, this piece (then called *St. John's Eve* and both severely and justly criticized by Balakireff) had long been utterly neglected by its author, gathering dust among his *d'inachevé.* When composing Gedeonoff's *Mlada* Musorgski had made use of the material to be found in *A Night on Bald Mount* and, introducing singing into it, had written the scene of Chernobog on Mount Triglav (Three Peaks).

[1] Vyechasha, June 14, 1905.

That was the second form of the same piece in substance. Its third form had developed in his composing of *The Fair at Sorochinsty,* when Musorgski conceived the queer and incoherent idea of making the peasant lad, without rhyme or reason, see the Witches' Sabbath in a dream; this was to form a sort of stage intermezzo that did not chime at all with the rest of the scenario of *Sorochinskaya Yarmarka.* This time the piece ended with the ringing of the village church bell, at the sounds of which the frightened evil spirits vanished. Tranquility and dawn were built on the theme of the peasant lad himself who had seen the fantastic dream. In working on Musorgski's piece I made use of its last version for the purpose of closing the composition. Now then, the first form of the piece was for piano solo with orchestra, the second form and the third—vocal compositions and for the stage, into the bargain (unorchestrated)! None of these forms was fit to be published and performed. With Musorgski's material as a basis I decided to create an instrumental piece, by retaining all of the author's best and coherent material, adding the fewest possible interpolations of my own. It was necessary to create a form in which Musorgski's ideas would mould in the best fashion. It was a difficult task of which the satisfactory solution baffled me for two years, though in the other works of Musorgski I had got on with comparative ease. I had been unable to get at either form, modulation or orchestration; and the piece lay inert until the following year. Work on the other compositions of my departed friend, however, was progressing. Progressing also was their publication at Bessel's under my editorial supervision.

Among my own works, jotted down during this season, must be set down the sketch of a piano concerto in C sharp minor on a Russian theme, chosen not without Balakireff's advice. In all ways the concerto proved a chip from Liszt's concertos. It must be said that it sounded beautiful and proved entirely satisfactory in the sense of piano technique and style; this greatly astonished Balakireff, who found my concerto to his liking. He had by no means expected that I, who was not a pianist, should know how to compose anything entirely pianistic. I recollect that once a little tiff occurred between Balakireff and myself regarding some detail in my concerto. Yet that disagreement did not cool him toward my composition. I cannot clearly recall, exactly when I first con-

ceived the thought of setting to work on the piano concerto, nor when the concerto was finally ready and orchestrated.

During this season's concerts of the Free Music School, the famous *Tamara,* now at last completed, was performed. A fine, interesting composition, though one which seemed somewhat heavy, sewn together of patches, and not altogether devoid of dullish spots. The spell of the former improvisations of the late 60's was no longer there. And it could not be otherwise: the piece had been composing for over fifteen years (with interruptions, to be sure). In fifteen years a man's entire organism, to the very last cell, changes several times, perhaps. The Balakireff of the 80's was not the Balakireff of the '60's.

CHAPTER XIX

1883–86

Court Chapel. The Coronation. Organizing the instrumental and the precentors' classes. Abolition of the post of Inspector of Naval Bands. Byelyayeff's Fridays. A. Lyadoff's marriage. Text-book of Harmony. Byelyayeff—publisher. Rehearsal at the Pyetropavlovski School. Revision of Symphony in C-major. Beginning of Russian Symphony Concerts. Trip to the Caucasus.

The changes occasioned by Alexander III coming to the throne affected also the Court Chapel, of which Bakhmetyeff was the director. He was dismissed. The status of the Chapel and its lists were worked out afresh. Count Sheryemetyeff, who was not even a dilettante in the art of music, was made chief of the Chapel. This post was, as it were, only representative and honorary; the work in reality fell upon the shoulders of the Chapel Superintendent and his assistant. Sheryemtyeff chose Balakireff as superintendent and the latter, in turn, chose me as his aid. The mysterious thread leading to this unexpected appointment was in the hands of T. I. Filippoff (then Imperial Comptroller), and procurator-general Pobyedonostseff.[1] Balakireff—Filippoff—Count Sheryemetyeff—the bond of these men rested on the ground of religion, orthodox faith, and remnants of Slavophilism. Then followed Sablyer and Pobyedonostseff and Samarin, and, possibly, Katkoff—those ancient bulwarks of absolute monarchy and orthodoxy. Music proper had played only an insignificant rôle in Balakireff's appointment; still the thread had led to him, really a remarkable musician. On the other hand, Balakireff, who felt no firm theoretical or pedagogical ground under his feet, took me as assistant, since I had plunged into the theoretical and pedagogical activity of the Conservatory. My appointment as assistant-superintendent of the Court Chapel took place in February, 1883.

[1] Of the Holy Synod. J. A. J.

On joining the Chapel Balakireff and I were utterly at a loss as to how to go about the unfamiliar undertaking. The Chapel choir was magnificent. Its four instructors, Smirnoff, Azyeyeff, Syrbooloff and Kopyloff, were men of knowledge and experience. From ancient days, as far back as Bortnyanski's time, the well-arranged matter of church-singing had been running splendidly. However, the instrumental classes for boys, their bringing up, as well as their general instruction were beneath all criticism. The adult singers received both salary and lodgings on a par with officials; they throve, more or less. But the illiterate boys, beaten without mercy as they were, uneducated, and taught the violin, the cello or the piano only after a fashion, those, as a rule, met with a sorry fate, after the loss of their voices. They were provided with a certain amount of money due them and were dismissed from the Chapel to the four quarters of the globe,—ignorant and unaccustomed to work. From their ranks came scriveners, common servants, provincial singers and—in the best of cases—ignorant precentors and petty officials. Many of them took to drink and went to the devil. Our first care was, of course, to improve their bringing up and education, to train the most musically-gifted of them as good orchestral musicians or precentors and to secure them bread and butter for the future. It was unthinkable to accomplish this during the first spring of our connection with the Chapel; and all we could do was to make observations. The instructors in musical subjects at the Chapel were: Kremyenyetski—violin, Markus—cello, Zhdanoff—double-bass, Goldstein—piano, the ancient Joseph Hunke—theory of music. Goldstein, a talented pianist, was not a particularly zealous instructor. Balakireff (an implacable Jew-hater) conceived a hatred for Goldstein owing to his Jewish extraction and got rid of him that very spring. He also dismissed the Italian Cavalli who taught the adult voices solo-singing. For some time in the beginning nobody was engaged to replace these instructors.

The coronation of Tsar Alexander III was set for May 15th. The entire personnel of the Chapel, Balakireff and myself included, went to Moscow. At Moscow we had to stay some three weeks. First came the preparations for the solemnity, then the Emperor's entry, the coronation proper, and, finally, the consecration of the Temple of the Saviour. The Chapel was quartered in the Krem-

lin. Balakireff and I lived in the Grand Moscow Hotel. In reality, I personally had nothing to do. The choristers and their teachers were busy, while all economic and administrative duties devolved upon Balakireff. Arrayed in uniforms of the Court, we attended the coronation at the Oospyenski Cathedral (Cathedral of the Assumption), standing in the choirs: Balakireff in the right, I in the left one. Near me stood the artist Kramskoy, commissioned to sketch the picture of the solemnity. He was the only man in evening dress at the Cathedral, all the rest wore uniforms. The ceremony went off with pomp, the Emperor recited the *Credo* in a clear-cut voice; the singing was safely over. Tears of emotion rolled in streams down the cheeks of one of our singers, our secretary K. A. Vargin. As a whole, the spectacle was beautiful and gorgeous.

Also the consecration of the Temple of the Nativity of the Saviour passed off solemnly; at the most important moment of the service—the drawing asunder of the veil—a canticle of several bars (manufactured by me), of eight or even ten-part counterpoint was sung. After the performance in Moscow, I never saw and completely forgot the score of this canticle, which Balakireff had made me compose for the occasion. Most probably it is still lying tucked away somewhere in the Court Chapel.

After returning to St. Petersburg with the Chapel, I moved to Tayitsy for the summer.

The summer of 1883 passed unproductively for me in regard to composing. During the summer the Chapel was quartered at the English Palace in Old Pyetyerhof. Frequent trips there consumed a good deal of my time. I gave the youngster singers whatever I could: taught them elementary piano-playing, elementary theory, heard their violin and cello lessons,—if only to accustom them to some slight regularity of study, to a serious attitude towards their musical future and to kindle in them a desire and love for art. At home, as far as I recall, I drew up plans for the future organization of the classes, tried my hand at sketches of ecclesiastic canticles, and partly pondered revisions of my Third Symphony in C-major, with which I was extremely dissatisfied. For diversion, my wife, my son Misha and I made a trip to Imatra.[1] In the fall of 1883 we gave up the apartment where we had

[1] A famous waterfall in Finland. J. A. J.

lived for ten years. With the growth of my family it had become inconvenient, and we moved to Vladimirskaya, corner of Kolokol'naya Street.

All my activity during this season was directed towards improving the progress of the musical classes at the Court Chapel, with its former resources and instructors; the ensuing academic season —toward organizing the Chapel's instrumental class and the precentors' class on new principles, after having considered and worked out a clear program. I have already spoken of the instrumental class; as for the precentors' class, none such had existed at the Chapel. Young men who wished to learn a little and receive a precentor's diploma, usually came to the Chapel from the interior of Russia and were assigned to one of the four instructors in ecclesiastic singing, to learn the "deep mystery." Having studied with the teacher and having passed an examination according to some vague and indefinite program, they received the desired certificate and left for the four points of the compass. The entire system of instruction, for the instrumental class as well as for those specializing as precentors—established by L'voff, the composer of *Bozhe Tsarya khrani!* (God save the Tsar!),—was good for nothing. Everything had to be made over, or rather, created anew. To this end were directed all my thoughts and designs of that year.

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At one of the Russian Musical Society Concerts, given under A. G. Rubinstein's direction, I conducted, at his invitation, the Overture and entr'actes to the drama *Pskovityanka,* as I have mentioned earlier. At the Free School Concert of February 27, 1884, my piano concerto was played by N. S. Lavroff for the first time, and excerpts from *Khovanshchina* in my arrangement and with my orchestration were performed at the same occasion.

In the spring of 1884 I was relieved of my duties as Inspector of Bands of the Navy Department. The new acting head of the Navy Department, Shestakoff, inaugurated various reforms along with the introduction of a civil service qualification. Among these *useful* reforms must be considered also the abolition of the post of Inspector of Bands. The corresponding post in the Guards continued to be considered indispensable, but the Navy musicians were

allowed to play according to their own sweet will, as the band had been placed under the supervision of some adjutant of the Navy Staff. Accordingly, my government service was confined exclusively to the Chapel, that is to the Court Department.

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M. P. Byelyayeff, an ardent lover of music, particularly chamber-music, himself viola-player and a zealous player of quartets, had long before then begun to gather his friends, thorough quartetists, at his house, every Friday. The evenings usually opened with Haydn, then came Mozart, then Beethoven and last, some quartet of post-Beethoven music. The quartets of each composer followed one another promptly in their numerical order. If Haydn's First Quartet was played one week, the second came the following week, etc. When the last one had been played the first was taken up again. Toward the winter of 1883–84 Byelyayeff's "Fridays" became rather well-attended. In addition to the usual quartet-players (Prof. Gesechus, Dr. Gelbke, the Engineer Evald) they were attended by Glazunoff, Borodin, Lyadoff, Dütsch and many others. I, too, became a regular attendant at Byelyayeff's Fridays. The evenings were interesting. Haydn's, Mozart's and Beethoven's early quartets were played competently. The later quartets—not so well, occasionally even quite badly, although the quartet-players read the music fluently. When our circle made its appearance at the "Fridays," their repertory was increased. Quartets of recent times were performed in order to rouse familiarity with them. Sasha Glazunoff, composing his First Quartet in D-major, tried it out at the Byelyayeff Fridays. Subsequently all his quartets and quartet-suites, even those not quite finished, were played at the house of Byelyayeff who was thoroughly in love with the youthful composer's talent. In addition to his own compositions, how many different things Glazunoff arranged for Byelyayeff's quartet! Fugues of Bach and songs of Grieg and many others, innumerable. Byelyayeff's Fridays grew very lively and were never permitted to lapse. If one of the quartet-players fell ill, Byelyayeff secured some one else in his stead. Byelyayeff himself was never ill. The personnel of the quartet was as follows: the cellist originally was a certain Nikol'ski, whose place was taken by Evald, first violin—Gelbke,

second violin—Gesechus, viola—Byelyayeff. Thus constituted, the quartet existed for many years, until death carried away the cordial host.

The music over with, supper was served at one in the morning. The suppers were generous, and laced with abundant libations. Occasionally, after supper, Glazunoff or somebody else played on the piano something new of his own, just composed or just arranged for four-hands. Adjournment was late, at 3 A. M. Some, finding insufficient what they had imbibed at supper, would, after parting with the host, repair—to use a mild term—to a restaurant "to continue." At times, after supper, during the music-making, a bottle or two of Champagne appeared on the table and was opened to "baptize" the new composition.

In the course of time, during the subsequent years, the "Fridays" were ever more and more numerously attended. Fyeliks Blumenfeld, a graduate of the Conservatory, and his brother Sigizmund came. To quartet music were added trios, quintets, etc. with the piano. Other pianists, too, sometimes merely on a visit, appeared. Conservatory youngsters, graduated from my courses, also began to attend the Byelyayeff Fridays. Many violinists turned up. A. K. Glazunoff, who sometimes played the cello, also took part in the quintets, sextets and octets. Vyerzhbilovich, too, made his appearance. The libations at supper also increased. But of that later.

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Anatoli Lyadoff, then already an instructor at the Conservatory, married during the 1883–84 season. I recall him, one morning shortly before his marriage, telling me of his intention, and the two of us leaving the Conservatory that morning and roaming about the city almost till dinner, having a heart to heart talk about the impending change in his life. Yet, when Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and I later expressed our desire to meet his wife, the queer fellow flatly refused. He said he wished his marriage to bring no change whatever in his relations with his musical friends. His home circle would be made up of the close friends and acquaintances of his wife, while toward his friends in art he wished to remain, as it were, of the bachelor estate as before. After marriage the status he had desired established itself: he introduced

A. K. LYADOFF *from the painting by* I. Y. RYEPIN

none of his musician intimates and friends-in-art to his wife, went everywhere alone, even to concerts and the theatres. Visiting him rarely, I never saw his wife, as he always received me in his study, carefully locking the doors to the other rooms. Curious by nature, Byelyayeff could not endure this state of affairs; knowing that Anatoli was not at home, he once rang their bell, called his wife to the door, to transmit some nonsense to her husband, and, having introduced himself, made her acquaintance. Subsequently, many years later, Lavroff, Byelyayeff, Glazunoff, Sokoloff and Wihtol gained admittance to his family. Yet Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and I never have seen his wife, despite our friendly life-long relations with this bright, dear and most talented man.

Upon the ancient Hunke's leaving the Chapel, I took over his class in Harmony and grew exceedingly interested in teaching that subject. Chaykovski's system (I followed his text-book in private lessons) did not satisfy me. From constant talks with Anatoli regarding this subject, I came to know his system and methods of instruction, and conceived the idea of writing a new text-book of Harmony, according to a wholly new system as regards pedagogic methods and consecutiveness of exposition. Essentially, Lyadoff's system was an outgrowth of his professor Y. I. Johansen's system, and mine of Lyadoff's. Four scales were taken as the foundation of harmony: major and minor—natural, and major and minor—harmonic. The first exercises consisted of harmonizing the upper melodies and basses with the aid of the principal triads alone: the tonic, the dominant and the sub-dominant and their inversions. With so scant a stock of chords, the rules of part-writing proved very accurate. Through exercises in harmonizing melodies, with the aid of only the principal steps, the pupil's sense of rhythmic and harmonic balance and tendency toward the tonic were developed. Later, to the principal triads there were gradually added accessory ones, the dominant chord of the seventh and the other chords of the seventh. Figured bass was entirely done away with; on the other hand, to exercises in the harmonization of melodies and basses was added independent writing of half-periods from the same harmonic material. Later followed modulation, the science of which was based on the relationship of keys and the modulational plan, and not on the external connection (through common tones) of chords foreign to each other. In this way,

modulation proved ever natural and logical. After modulation followed suspensions, passing notes, subsidiary notes and all other devices of figuration. Finally, came the science of chromatically transformed chords and false progressions. Until the beginning of summer I only thought over, but did not write my text-book; I tested my pedagogic methods on my Chapel pupils, with considerable success.

In the spring of 1884 I recast and re-orchestrated my First Symphony, its principal tonality being changed from E flat minor to E-minor. It seemed to me that this youthful and, for the present time, naïve work of mine, provided its technical side were improved, could become a repertory piece for student and amateur orchestras. Subsequently I found that I had somewhat erred in my calculations: times had changed, and student and amateur had begun to gravitate towards Chaykovski's and Glazunoff's symphonies and my own pieces of more modern tendency than that of my first composition. Nevertheless Bessel's firm gladly undertook to publish my First Symphony in orchestral score and parts. That year there graduated from my class at the Conservatory—Ryb and N. A. Sokoloff. The former—subsequently instructor in musical theory at Kiyeff, the latter—a talented composer and teacher at St. Petersburg.

The summer of 1884 we spent at Tayitsy as before. On June 13 our daughter Nadya was born.

As in the previous summer, twice a week or so, I visited the juvenile singers at Pyetyerhof, continuing my instruction of them and proceeding to form a pupils' or rather children's string orchestra, for which I made several easy arrangements, principally excerpts from Glinka's operas, like *Kak mat' oobili* (When they killed mother), *Ty nye plach', sirotinushka* (Do not cry, thou orphan poor), etc. While at Tayitsy, I set to writing the text-book of harmony, which was ready toward the beginning of autumn and published lithographically, with the help of my assistant at the Chapel library, the chorister G. V. Ivanitsky, who copied the text-book in lithographic ink.

Besides this I worked on my orchestral sinfonietta in A-minor, recast from the first three movements of the Quartet on Russian Themes. The fourth movement of the quartet (on the ecclesiastic theme from Te Deum) I did not make use of, after all.

After my removal to town, at the beginning of the academic year, the precentors' and the instrumental class of the Chapel were definitely organized by me. P. A. Krasnokootski was engaged as instructor in violin, A. V. Reichard—piano, A. K. Lyadoff, and later N. A. Sokoloff and I. R. Shchigleff—harmony and elementary theory for the precentors' class. In addition to these, the former instructors taught, as well as S. A. Smirnoff, E. S. Azyeyeff, A. A. Kopyloff (violin, piano, church singing and rubric). Harmony in the instrumental class was taught by me; I also taught the orchestral class (then still exclusively strings) which was already making considerable progress.

The Chapel's lists were already new ones, and its financial resources had increased.

I was invited to conduct one of the Russian Musical Society Concerts. Among other numbers, there was performed for the first time the C sharp minor Overture of the talented Lyapoonoff, a young composer, Balakireff's favourite, who had lately graduated from the Moscow Conservatory and recently made his bow in St. Petersburg.

My first Symphony in E-minor was played that same season by the St. Petersburg University students' orchestra under Dütsch's leadership.

Delighted by the brilliant beginning of Glazunoff's activity as a composer, M. P. Byelyayeff proposed to him to publish his First Symphony (E-major) in orchestral score, orchestra parts and arrangement for four-hands at his, Byelyayeff's expense. Despite some objection on the part of Balakireff, who urged Sasha not to give his consent, as Byelyayeff had been neither music-dealer nor music publisher, Glazunoff yielded to M. P.'s pleas. Byelyayeff communicated with the Röder firm in Leipsic and proceeded with publication; and the young composer's symphony was the beginning of the honourable and noteworthy publishing activity of M. P., who established forever the imperishable house of "M. P. Byelyayeff, Leipsic," for publishing the works of Russian composers. The Symphony was followed, in progressive order, by all of Glazunoff's newly-appearing compositions, my piano concerto, *Skazka* (Fairy-tale), the *Overture on Russian Themes,* etc.; after me followed Borodin, Lyadoff, Cui; then came other young composers, and the business grew literally every hour. In accordance

with Mitrofan Petrovich's fundamental rule, no composition whatever was acquired without payment therefor, as is frequently done by other publishing houses. No orchestral or chamber-music composition was published otherwise than in orchestral score, orchestral parts and arrangement for four-hands. With authors M. P. was punctual and exacting: particular as to correct proof-reading, he paid the author's fee only after the second proof had been read. In choosing works for publication, M. P. was guided at first by his own taste and the greater or lesser authority of the composer's name. Later, when many young composers appeared, who wished to be published by his firm, he began to consult Sasha, Anatoli and me, constituting us into a permanent official musical committee with his firm. For the marketing of his publications, M. P. made arrangements with J. I. Jurgenson's music-shop, and for the management of the publishing business in Leipsic he engaged an experienced man—G. Schäffer.

During the season of 1884–85, Byelyayeff, who was aflame with the desire to hear once more the First Symphony and with impatience to hear the orchestral suite Glazunoff had just composed, set his mind on arranging, at the hall of the Pyetropavlovski School, for an orchestral rehearsal of these compositions. The opera orchestra was brought together and some people close to the matter were invited: the Glazunoffs, my wife, V. V. Stasoff and others. Dütsch and the composer were to conduct. Sasha was ready to undertake it; but, seeing well that Sasha was unprepared for the conductor's task and might easily injure himself in the orchestra's eyes, I dissuaded him from appearing as conductor for the time being, convincing M. P. Byelyayeff, as well. This rehearsal was conducted by Dütsch and myself. Everything went off in the best of style. One of the numbers of the Suite, *Oriental Dance,* very odd and savage, was left out upon my plea; everything else was given in full. The author, Byelyayeff and the audience felt inordinately gratified. This rehearsal was the foundation of the Russian Symphony Concerts, inaugurated by Byelyayeff the following season.

Absorbed by activity in the Chapel's instrumental class and precentors' class, I hardly turned my thoughts toward my own work as composer during this season, just as in the one preceding. Yet I began to think occasionally of revising my Third Symphony

in C-major, the first movement of which I managed to finish during the following summer.

The summer of 1885 we spent again at Tayitsy. Trips to Pyetyerhoff to visit the Chapel, revision of the Symphony, composition and harmonization of certain ecclesiastical canticles, and study of musical forms filled up my time. As far as I recall, during my visit to the Chapel I visited the Glazunoffs who had taken a house, that summer, in Old Pyetyerhoff. At that time, Sasha began to show a very deep interest in wind-instruments. He had a clarinet, a French horn, a trombone and something more of his own. Lessons on the French horn he took from no less a player than Francke, the first French horn of the opera orchestra; on the other instruments and the cello he practised without a teacher. In order to gain closer familiarity with the wind-instruments, I, too, took part in these exercises. The crowning point of my progress in clarinet playing was reached during the following years, when I performed on that instrument the part of the second violin in Glinka's Quartet,[1] Dütsch playing first violin, Glazunoff, cello, and Wihtol, as I recall it, viola.

Early in the season 1885–86 the rebuilding of the Court Chapel was begun, and the capella itself, in its entirety, temporarily moved to a private house in Millionnaya Street. The quarters were narrow and inconvenient. The precentors' class, organized the year before, it was found necessary to install in stables in the yard, the buildings being remodelled for the purpose. The orchestra class was quartered in the dormitories of the young choristers. Nevertheless, work went on successfully. In the precentors' class there were already many non-resident pupils, principally from among the regimental singers; in the instrumental class I began, gradually, to introduce the wind-instruments, in which instructors were engaged from the court orchestra and from the opera. At first the pupils in wind-instruments naturally could not, as yet, take part in the orchestral class; but the players of bow-instruments had advanced considerably and were beginning to play fairly well things more or less difficult. Occasionally I invited wind-instruments from the regimental band for joint playing; in that way it was possible to perform symphonies of Haydn and Beethoven in the proper manner. Once, with my orchestral class, I succeeded in

[1] F-major (1830). J. A. J.

giving a sufficiently neat rendering of the recently orchestrated first movement of my Symphony in C-major. Borodin was present and seemed quite pleased.

Hans von Bülow, who conducted the Russian Musical Society's concerts that season, was very cordial toward Glazunoff, Borodin, Cui and myself, and readily played our compositions. Of my own works he gave *Antar;* for some reason, however, he was in a capricious mood at the rehearsal, testy with the orchestra, even suggesting irritably to me to conduct it in his stead. Of course I declined. Presently Bülow calmed down and led *Antar* in excellent fashion.

The preceding season, M. P. Byelyayeff had arranged a rehearsal of Glazunoff's compositions before an intimate gathering; he now conceived the idea of giving, this season, and at his own expense, a public concert of other works besides those of Glazunoff. The concert took place at the Hall of the Club of the Nobility. G. O. Dütsch was the conductor. Among other things, my concerto was played, and, of Glazunoff's compositions, his very recently finished *Styeñka Razin.*[1] The audience was not particularly large, but Byelyayeff felt content, nevertheless.

Of other musical events of this season let me note a very fair first performance of Musorgski's *Khovanshchina* by amateur members of the Dramatic Circle, under Goldstein's leadership. The opera took the fancy of the public, and had three or four performances.

My work during this season consisted of: composing a *Vespers,* in collaboration with the teachers of the Court Chapel, Smirnoff, Azyeyeff, Kopyloff and Syrbooloff; bringing out my text-book of Harmony (printed, not lithographed as in its first edition); further work on orchestrating as well as revising my Third Symphony. Of my Conservatory pupils, those graduating were Y. I. Wihtol, A. A. Pyetroff and Antipoff. Despite his undoubted talent, the last named, owing to insufficient activity and a very characteristic dissoluteness, would not have managed to finish the *Allegro* set for his examination task, if he had not been helped on the sly by

[1] The symphonic poem, *Styeñka Razin,* writes M. Montagu-Nathan, in his *Short History of Russian Music,* is "based on a story of the Cossack raider of that name, whose revolt against the Czar Alexis (son of the first Romanoff) ended in his capture and execution in 1672, the date of Peter the Great's birth. Styeñka Razin is the hero of many national ballads." C. V. V.

Glazunoff, who orchestrated his composition for him. Glazunoff dashed the thing off for his own practice exclusively; the author, meanwhile, was naïvely convinced that he himself would not have orchestrated it any worse if he had not been pressed for time. All this was kept a secret; the composition sounded well and was subsequently published by Byelyayeff, who was quite aware of the truth about it, however.

Rehearsal of Glazunoff's works the year before, and the concert arranged by Byelyayeff during this season, led me to think that several yearly concerts of Russian compositions would be most desirable; the number of Russian orchestral compositions was growing, and there were always difficulties in finding a place for them on the program of the concerts of the Russian Musical Society and other organizations. I communicated my idea to Byelyayeff; it struck his fancy, and with the next season he decided to inaugurate a series of annual concerts made up exclusively of Russian compositions, to be conducted by Dütsch and myself, under the name of Russian Symphony Concerts.

Having settled at Tayitsy for the summer and left our children in their grandmother's care, Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and I went on a trip to the Caucasus. We traveled to Nizhni-Novgorod by rail, boarded the steamer, and went down the Volga to Tsaritsyn. Crossing to Kalach by steamer over the Don River (where we ran aground some ten times) we reached Rostoff-on-the-Don, and thence, by rail, *via* the station Mineral'niya Vody (Mineral Waters), we arrived in Zhelyeznovodsk and made ourselves comfortable there for a while. No cure had been prescribed us, and we therefore spent our time in glorious tramps about the environs, to the Zhelyeznaya Gora (Iron Mountain), to Beshtau, etc. Having also visited Pyatigorsk with Mashook and Kislovodsk and reached Vladikavkaz, we travelled by carriage over the Military Gruzian (Georgian) Road as far as Tiflis. We stayed a few days at Tiflis, took in Borzhom, then boarded the steamer at Batoom,[1] started for the Crimea to Yalta and, *via* Simfyeropol', journeyed to Lozovaya; from here, after a visit to the estate of M. M. Ippolitoff-Ivanoff who lived there, we returned to St. Petersburg and Tayitsy. In all, this trip consumed nearly two months and was exceedingly pleasant and interesting. The Volga, the Caucasus, the

[1] Centre of the famous Russian oil-fields. J. A. J.

Black Sea, the Crimea and many other things worthy of note, had left the best impression with us.

During our stay at Zhelyeznovodsk, I did some work on the revision of my Third Symphony; I finished it, however, only partly at Tayitsy; the rest I did after our removal thence to St. Petersburg, the following season.

CHAPTER XX

1886–88

Russian Symphony Concerts. Fantasy for the violin. Death of Borodin. Balakireff's circle and Byelyayeff's compared. Orchestrating *Prince Igor*. Composition of *Capriccio* and its performance. *Shekherazada*. *Easter Overture*.

The plan of Russian Symphony Concerts was carried out during the season of 1886–87. Four concerts were given by M. P. Byelyayeff at Kononoff's Hall on October 15, 22 and 29 and November 5. The first and the third of these were conducted by me, the second and the fourth were led by G. O. Dütsch. The attendance, though not over-large, was fair, and the concerts were a success morally, if not materially. Among other numbers I did particularly well with Borodin's Symphony in E flat major, with which I took especial pains on this occasion, having first noted down numerous fine nuances in the orchestral parts. The composer, as I remember, was delighted.

The orchestration of *A Night on Bald Mount,* which had baffled me so long, was finished for the concerts of this season, and the piece, given by me at the first concert in a manner that could not be improved upon, was demanded again and again with unanimity. Only a tamtam had to be substituted for the bell; the one I selected at the bell-store proved to be off-pitch in the Hall, owing to a change in temperature.

Having finished the revision of my Third Symphony and having grown interested in violin technique (I had gained a rather thorough familiarity with it in the instrumental class), I conceived the idea of composing some virtuoso piece for the violin with orchestra. Taking two Russian themes as a basis, I composed a Fantasy on these and dedicated it to P. A. Krasnokootski—violin instructor at the Chapel—, to whom I was indebted for many explanations in the field of violin technique. This Fantasy I tried out

with my orchestra of Chapel pupils who had made considerable progress by that time. I was pleased with the piece, and took it into my head to write another virtuoso piece for violin and orchestra on Spanish themes. However, having made a sketch of it, I gave up the idea, preferring as I did to compose, subsequently, an orchestral piece with virtuoso instrumentation, on the same themes. Mention must also be made of the joint composition of a quartet on the theme of B—la—f (B-A-F) [1] for M. P. Byelyayeff's birthday which was celebrated at a gathering of numerous friends, and accompanied with gigantic dining and wining on an equally heroic scale. As is well-known, the first movement of this Quartet belongs to my pen, the Serenade to Borodin, the Scherzo to Lyadoff and the Finale to Glazunoff. The Quartet was performed before the dinner, and the hero of the occasion was thoroughly delighted with the surprise we had given him.

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Early in the morning, at an unaccustomed hour, on February 16, 1887, I was astonished by a visit from V. V. Stasoff at our house. V. V. was beside himself. "Do you know," he said with agitation, "Borodin is dead." Borodin had died late the evening before, suddenly, instantaneously. Gay and animated, among guests gathered at his house, he had fallen stark dead, in the very act of talking to some one. Yekatyerina Sergeyevna was at Moscow that winter. I shall not say what a blow this death was to myself and all his other intimates. Immediately the question came up: what was to be done with the unfinished opera *Prince Igor* and his other unpublished and unfinished compositions? Together with Stasoff we forthwith went to his apartment and fetched all his musical manuscripts to my house.

After Alyeksandr Porfiryevich had been buried at the cemetery of the Nyevski Monastery, Glazunoff and I together sorted all the manuscripts. We decided to finish, orchestrate and set in order all that had been left behind by A. P., as well as prepare it for publication on which M. P. Byelyayeff had resolved. In the first place there was the unfinished *Prince Igor.* Certain numbers of the opera, such as the first chorus, the dance of the Polovtsy, Yaroslavna's Lament, the recitative and song of Vladimir Galitski, Konchak's aria, the arias of Konchakovna and Prince Vladi-

[1] Be-la-ef=Byelyayeff. J. A. J.

mir Igorevich, as well as the closing chorus—had been finished and orchestrated by the composer. Much else existed in the form of finished piano sketches; all the rest was in fragmentary rough-draft only, while a good deal simply did not exist. For Act II and III (in the camp of the Polovtsy) there was no adequate libretto,—no scenario even,—there were only scattered verses and musical sketches, or finished numbers that showed no connection between them. The synopsis of these acts I knew full well from talks and joint discussions with Borodin, although, in his projects, he had been changing a great deal, striking things out and putting them back again. The smallest bulk of composed music proved to be in Act III. Glazunoff and I settled the matter as follows between us: he was to fill in all the gaps in Act III and write down from memory the Overture played so often by the composer, while I was to orchestrate, finish composing and systematize all the rest that had been left unfinished and unorchestrated by Borodin. Communicating to each other our intentions and taking counsel together about all details, Glazunoff and I went at our task at the beginning of spring. Among Borodin's other works, the two movements of the unfinished symphony held the place of honour. For the first movement there existed an unrecorded exposition of the themes, which Glazunoff remembered by heart. For the second movement there had been projected a recorded ¾ scherzo for the bow-quartet, without trio; for this latter the composer had intended to use material that had not gone into the opera—the narrative of the merchants.

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Of the concerts of the season of 1886–87 let me mention one given under Balakireff's direction, by the Free Music School, in memory of Franz Liszt who had died in the summer of 1886. As I have already said, Balakireff's conducting fell far short of weaving about us that potent spell which we had felt in old days. Who had changed, who had advanced—Balakireff or we? We, I suppose. We had grown, had learned, had been educated, had seen and had heard; Balakireff, on the other hand, had stood stock-still, if, indeed, he had not slid back a trifle.

But who were we in the Eighties? In the Sixties and the Seventies we were Balakireff's circle, at first under his absolute leadership, later little by little casting off the yoke of his absolutism and

gaining greater independence in the persons of our individual members. This circle, which had been ironically nicknamed the "mighty *koochka* (coterie)," had consisted of Balakireff, Cui, Borodin, Musorgski, myself, and later An. Lyadoff and, to a certain extent, Lodyzhenski. The circle's member in perpetuity, V. V. Stasoff, as one who was not a musician by specialty, I place in a class by himself. *Our* circle of the Eighties, especially beginning with the latter half of that decade, was no longer Balakireff's circle, but Byelyayeff's. The former had centred around Balakireff as its senior member and their teacher, the latter grouped around Byelyayeff as its Maecenas, publisher, impresario and host. Musorgski was no longer among the living, and in 1887 Borodin, too, followed him. Having received an appointment to Slavic lands, in the service of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Lodyzhenski had vanished, completely forsaking all musical study. Cui, though keeping up cordial relations with Byelyayeff's circle, held aloof, nevertheless, and by himself, gravitating more toward foreign (Parisian and Belgian) music folk, with the aid of The Countess Mercy d'Argenteau.[1] But Balakireff, as the former head of his scattered circle, admitted no intercourse whatever with Byelyayeff's circle, which he apparently held in scorn. As for his relations with Byelyayeff personally, they were more than cool, owing to the latter's unwillingness to subsidize the concerts of the Free Music School, as well as owing to certain misunderstandings in the publishing field. Balakireff's attitude towards Byelyayeff soon began to turn to open enmity towards Byelyayeff himself, to the whole circle, and to all its affairs; beginning with the Nineties, all intercourse between Byelyayeff's circle and Bala-

[1] In 1882 the Countess Mercy d'Argenteau, a music-lover living in Belgium, received from a friend a copy of some dances by Napravnik. She was interested enough to ask her friend to write Napravnik for more information in regard to his own music, and the music of the important modern Russian composers. Napravnik, entirely academic in his tastes, sent her the required particulars in regard to himself, and added that, outside of Chaykovski, he knew of no other Russian composers of outstanding merit. The Countess, after examining the works received, decided that Napravnik's works were "conductor's music" and that the music of Chaykovski left her "cold." The following year her friend sent her compositions by Borodin and Cui. Especially liking Cui's piece, she wrote to the composer and received in return his pamphlet, *Music in Russia.* This pamphlet gave a full chronicle of the work of the Five, and the Countess lost no time in procuring all the available compositions of the Band. The early knowledge of the Modern Russian school in Belgium was due to her enthusiasm. Through her intervention, *The Prisoner of the Caucasus* was produced at Liège in 1886, and Cui was invited to superintend the production. C. V. V.

kireff was broken off. Balakireff was joined for good and all by S. M. Lyapoonoff who had fallen completely under his sway. The relations between Balakireff and Cui also became rather strained, but with me Balakireff was somewhat more intimate, owing to our joint duties in the Chapel. So then the "mighty *koochka*" had gone to pieces irrevocably. The connecting links between the former circle of Balakireff and the newly formed circle of Byelyayeff were Borodin, Lyadoff and I; and, after Borodin's death, Lyadoff and I alone. Glazunoff cannot be counted a connecting link, since his appearance in the field coincides with the time of the mighty coterie's dissolution.

Beginning with the latter half of the Eighties, *we,* or Byelyayeff's circle, consisted of Glazunoff, Lyadoff, Dütsch, Fyeliks Blumenfeld, his brother Sigizmund (a talented singer, accompanist and composer of songs), and myself. Later, as they graduated from the Conservatory, there appeared N. A. Sokoloff, Antipoff, Wihtol and others, of whom I shall speak in due course. The venerable V. V. Stasoff always preserved the same cordial and close relations with the new circle as well, but his influence in it was no longer the same as in Balakireff's.

Can Byelyayeff's circle be looked upon as a continuation of Balakireff's? Was there a certain modicum of similarity between one and the other and what constituted the difference, apart from the change in its personnel in the course of time? The similarity, indicating that Byelyayeff's circle was a continuation of Balakireff's circle (in addition to the connecting links) consisted of the advanced ideas, the progressivism common to the two of them. But Balakireff's circle corresponded to the period of storm and stress in the evolution of Russian music; Byelyayeff's circle represented the period of calm, onward march. Balakireff's circle was revolutionary, Byelyayeff's, on the other hand, was progressive. If we leave out of account Lodyzhenski, who had accomplished nothing, and Lyadoff, who had appeared later, Balakireff's circle consisted of Balakireff, Cui, Musorgski, Borodin and myself (the French have retained the denomination of "les cinq" for us to this day). Byelyayeff's circle was numerous and grew more so in the course of time. All the five members of Balakireff's circle were subsequently recognized as prominent representatives of Russian musical creative art. The other circle was

variegated in make-up: it contained prominent composers of talent, and men of lesser gifts, and men who were not composers at all, but conductors like Dütsch, for instance, or solo-performers like N. S. Lavroff. Balakireff's circle consisted of musicians of feeble technique, amateurs almost, who were pioneering by sheer force of their creative talents, force that occasionally served them in lieu of technique and, occasionally, (as was frequently the case with Musorgski), was insufficient to conceal its shortcomings. Byelyayeff's circle, on the contrary, consisted of composers and musicians technically trained and educated. The origin of music that interested it was traced by Balakireff's circle no further back than to Beethoven; Byelyayeff's circle respected not only its musical fathers, but its grandfathers and great-grandfathers as well, going back as far as Palestrina. Balakireff's circle recognized well-nigh exclusively the orchestra, the piano, the chorus and vocal solos with orchestra, ignoring chamber-music, vocal ensembles (excepting the operatic duet), the chorus *a capella* and the solo for bow-instruments; Byelyayeff's circle had a broader outlook on these forms. Balakireff's circle was exclusive and intolerant; Byelyayeff's was more indulgent and eclectic. Balakireff's circle did not want to study but broke paths forward, relying upon its powers, succeeding therein and learning; Byelyayeff's circle studied, attaching as it did great importance to technical perfection, but it also broke new paths, though more securely, even if less speedily. Balakireff's circle hated Wagner and strained to take no notice of him; those in Byelyayeff's circle had their eyes and ears open with eagerness to learn and respect. The relations of the one circle to its head were those of pupils to a teacher and elder brother, relations that had grown weaker as each of the lesser ones grew older, as I have pointed out more than once. Byelyayeff, on the other hand, was not the head, but rather the centre of his circle. How could Byelyayeff become such a centre and wherein lay his force of attraction? Byelyayeff was a wealthy man of commerce, with a number of personal crotchets, but withal an honest, kind man, frank to the point of brusqueness, occasionally straightforward to the verge of rudeness, yet with a heart that possessed tender strings undoubtedly; a cordial host and hospitable man. But his force of attraction did not lie in his broad cordiality nor the opportunities of feeding at his table.

M. P. BYELYAYEFF *from the painting by* I. Y. RYEPIN

It lay (aside from the sympathetic spiritual qualities of his nature) in his unlimited love for music and his devotion to it. Having conceived an interest in the Russian School through his acquaintance with Glazunoff's gifts, he gave himself up completely to the fostering and advancement of that School. He was a Mæcenas; but he was no gentleman-Mæcenas to squander money on art to suit his whims while really advancing it nowhere. To be sure, had he not been wealthy, he would have been unable to do for art what he did do; but in this regard he planted himself on noble, firm soil. He became a concert-impresario and publisher of Russian music without counting on any personal benefit; on the contrary, he gave to the cause enormous sums of money, concealing his name moreover to the utmost of his ability. The Russian Symphony Concerts he founded proved subsequently an institution with a life assured forever, while the publishing house *Belaieff, Leipzig* became one of the honoured and best-known European firms, likewise secured for all time.

Accordingly, Byelyayeff drew people to him by his personality, his devotion to art and his wealth not *per se* but as a means he applied towards sublime and disinterested object; and this made him the centre of attraction of the new circle of musicians who had only a certain hereditary connection with the quondam "mighty *koochka.*"

By force of matters purely musical I turned out to be head of the Byelyayeff circle. As the head Byelyayeff, too, considered me, consulting me about everything and referring everybody to me as chief. I was considerably older than the other members of the circle (but some eight years younger than Byelyayeff); I was the general teacher of the members of the circle, who had, in the majority of cases, graduated from the Conservatory under my guidance or had at least received some measure of instruction from me. Glazunoff had not studied much under me and soon came into the relation of younger friend. Lyadoff, Dütsch, Sokoloff, Wihtol and others became my pupils in instrumentation and free composition, after having been pupils of Y. I. Johansen up to fugue inclusive. Somewhat later I began to guide my pupils from harmony on; accordingly, men like Cheryepnin, Zolotaryoff and others were my pupils entirely. In the early days after the formation of Byelyayeff's circle and at the beginning of his

activity as a free lance, every young composer of the circle usually first showed me his new composition and availed himself of my criticism and my advice. Being devoid of Balakireff's exclusiveness and despotism, or perhaps being merely more "omnivorous," I strove to make my influence on them felt less and less as they gained more and more independence in creative work, and I rejoiced at all self-reliance developing in my former pupils. In the Nineties Glazunoff and Lyadoff began to share the leadership with me; upon M. P.'s death, in accordance with his last will and testament, they formed with me a Board of Trustees to manage the publishing business, the concerts, etc. But I shall speak of that in the proper place when I relate (in the orderly course of connected reminiscence) the details of the mutual relations of the circle's members to each other and to Byelyayeff.

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For several years the Russian Musical Society's Concerts had been passing from Rubinstein's hands to visiting conductors (Hans von Bülow, for one) and then back to Rubinstein. A certain shakiness and instability made themselves felt. Once, at the end of the season, Rubinstein called me to his office and proposed that I conduct the concerts of the Russian Musical Society the following season. I meant to think the proposal over, and even jotted down a program in the rough; but there the matter rested. Somehow, Rubinstein suppressed this question, nor did he raise it the next season; probably he did not like my program or else was in general reluctant to rely on my powers. Of course, I never mentioned it to him again.

For the summer of 1887 we rented a villa on the bank of Lake Nyelay, at the Nikol'skoye estate, in the Looga canton. Throughout the summer I worked assiduously on the orchestration of *Prince Igor* and managed to accomplish a great deal. In the middle of the summer this work was interrupted: I composed the *Spanish Capriccio* from the sketches of my projected virtuoso violin fantasy on Spanish themes. According to my plans the *Capriccio* was to glitter with dazzling orchestra colour and, manifestly, I had not been wrong. The work of orchestrating *Prince Igor* also came easily, without strain, and was evidently a success.

That summer there was a total eclipse of the sun, as if purposely coincident with my work on *Igor,* wherein the prologue depicts a solar eclipse as an evil omen to Prince Igor, who is starting out on an expedition against the Polovtsy. At Nikol'skoye the eclipse did not produce the right impression, as the sky was overcast, and the eclipse occurred early in the morning (soon after sunrise). Our nurse Avdotya even went so far as to deny the very fact of eclipse, considering it a gloom due to the frowning cloudy sky.

Visiting Pyetyerhoff from time to time in connection with my official duties and usually staying overnight at the Glazunoffs' who had a summer home there, I had talks with Alyeksandr Konstantinovich, and the two of us together pondered and discussed our work on *Prince Igor.* During the season of 1887–88 this work continued. To the task of orchestration was now added the need of a vocal score exactly agreeing with the orchestral score. This work was undertaken by Glazunoff, Dütsch, my wife, the two Blumenfelds and myself. The orchestral score and the piano score were being prepared for publication which M. P. Byelyayeff had undertaken. Soon printing began, and proof reading became the order of the day.

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The new quarters of the Court Chapel were now ready, and, quitting its temporary abode in Millionnaya Street, the Chapel had a house-warming.

This time, for M. P.'s birthday, Glazunoff, Lyadoff and I composed a quartet suite *Imyeniny (Birthday)* in three movements, of which the third, *Khorovod,* was from my pen.

The Russian Symphony Concerts (five in number) of this season were given at the Small Theatre. Owing to G. O. Dütsch's illness, I conducted all of them. The first concert was given in memoriam of Borodin and consisted of his compositions; among these there was performed for the first time the March of the Polovtsy from *Prince Igor*; I had orchestrated it in the summer, and it proved effective in the extreme. After the performance of this number I was presented with a large laurel wreath bearing the inscription: "In the name of Borodin." This same concert also saw the premières of the Overture to *Prince Igor* and

of the two movements of the unfinished Symphony in A-minor.

At one of the subsequent concerts my *Spanish Capriccio* was played. At the first rehearsal, the first movement (A-major, in ⅔ had hardly been finished when the whole orchestra began to applaud. Similar applause followed all the other parts wherever the pauses permitted. I asked the orchestra for the privilege of dedicating the composition to them. General delight was the answer. The *Capriccio* went without difficulties and sounded brilliant. At the concert itself it was played with a perfection and enthusiasm the like of which it never possessed subsequently, even when led by Nikisch himself. Despite its length the composition called forth an insistent encore. The opinion formed by both critics and the public, that the *Capriccio* is a *magnificently orchestrated piece*—is wrong. The *Capriccio* is a brilliant *composition for the orchestra.* The change of timbres, the felicitous choice of melodic designs and figuration patterns, exactly suiting each kind of instrument, brief virtuoso cadenzas for instruments solo, the rhythm of the percussion instruments, etc., constitute here the very *essence* of the composition and not its garb or orchestration. The Spanish themes, of dance character, furnished me with rich material for putting in use multiform orchestral effects. All in all, the *Capriccio* is undoubtedly a purely external piece, but vividly brilliant for all that. I was a little less successful in its third section (Alborado, in B flat major), where the brasses somewhat drown the melodic designs of the wood-winds; but this is very easy to remedy, if the conductor will pay attention to it and moderate the indications of the shades of force in the brass-instruments by replacing the fortissimo with a simple forte.

In the Russian Symphony Concerts of this season, besides my *Capriccio* there was also played my *Fantasy* for violin (Krasnokootski) and the *Andante* from Borodin's Quartet,—which I arranged for violin solo with orchestral accompaniment. The latter piece attracted no attention on the part of either audience or violinists, and quite undeservedly, in my opinion.

In the middle of the winter, engrossed as I was in my work on *Prince Igor* and other things, I conceived the idea of writing an orchestral composition on the subject of certain episodes from *Shekherazada,* as well as an overture on the themes of the *obi-*

khod.[1] With these intentions and suitable music sketches I moved with my entire family, early in the summer, to the estate of Glinki-Mavriny, Nyezhgovitsy, some twelve miles beyond Looga, on the Cheryemenyetskoye Lake. My family was increased in January: a daughter, Masha, was born to us.[2]

During the summer of 1888, at Neyzhgovitsy, I finished *Shekherazada* (in four movements) and *The Bright Holiday,*[3] an *Easter Overture* on themes of the *obikhod.* In addition, I wrote for violin and a small orchestra a mazurka on the Polish themes sung by my mother and heard in the Thirties and remembered by her from the time when her father was Governor of Volynia. These themes were familiar to me from infancy, and the idea of basing some composition on them had long interested me.

The program I had been guided by in composing *Shekherazada* consisted of separate, unconnected episodes and pictures from *The Arabian Nights,* scattered through all four movements of my suite: the sea and Sinbad's ship, the fantastic narrative of the Prince Kalender, the Prince and the Princess, the Bagdad festival and the ship dashing against the rock with the bronze rider upon it. The unifying thread consisted of the brief introductions to movements I, II, and IV and the intermezzo in Movement III, written for violin solo and delineating Shekherazada herself as telling her wondrous tales to the stern sultan. The final conclusion of Movement IV serves the same artistic purpose. In vain do people seek in my suite leading motives linked unbrokenly with ever the same poetic ideas and conceptions. On the contrary, in the majority of cases, all these seeming leitmotives are nothing but purely musical material or the given motives for symphonic development. These given motives thread and spread over all the movements of the suite, alternating and intertwining each with the other. Appearing as they do each time under different illumination, depicting each time different traits and expressing different moods, the self-same given motives and themes correspond each time to different images, actions and pictures. Thus, for instance, the sharply outlined fanfare motive

[1] *Obikhod* of church singing is a collection of the most important and most frequently used canticles of the Orthodox Church. The *obikhod* was the first printed music in Russia. (Moscow, 1772). J. A. J.

[2] Riva, June 30, 1906.

[3] The popular Russian name for Easter. J. A. J.

of the muted trombone and trumpet, which first appears in the Kalender's Narrative (Movement II) appears afresh in Movement IV, in the delineation of the wrecking ship, though this episode has no connection with the Kalender's Narrative. The principal theme of the Kalender's Narrative (B-minor, ¾) and the theme of the Princess in Movement III (B flat major, ⅝, clarinetto) in altered guise and quick tempo appear as the secondary themes of the Bagdad festival; yet nothing is said in *The Arabian Nights* about these persons taking part in the festivities. The unison phrase, as though depicting Shekherazada's stern spouse, at the beginning of the suite appears as a datum, in the Kalender's Narrative, where there cannot, however, be any mention of Sultan Shakhriar. In this manner, developing quite freely the musical data taken as a basis of the composition, I had in view the creation of an orchestral suite in four movements, closely knit by the community of its themes and motives, yet presenting, as it were, a kaleidoscope of fairy-tale images and designs of oriental character,—a method that I had to a certain degree made use of in my *Skazka* (Fairy-tale), the musical data of which are as little distinguishable from the poetic as they are in *Shekherazada.* Originally I had even intended to label Movement I of *Shekherazada*—Prelude; II—Ballade; III—Adagio; and IV—Finale; but on the advice of Lyadoff and others I had not done so. My aversion for the seeking of a too definite program in my composition led me subsequently (in the new edition) to do away with even those hints of it which had lain in the headings of each movement, like: The Sea; Sinbad's Ship; the Kalender's Narrative, etc.

In composing *Shekherazada* I meant these hints to direct but slightly the hearer's fancy on the path which my own fancy had travelled, and to leave more minute and particular conceptions to the will and mood of each. All I had desired was that the hearer, if he liked my piece as *symphonic music,* should carry away the impression that it is beyond doubt an oriental narrative of some numerous and varied fairy-tale wonders and not merely four pieces played one after the other and composed on the basis of themes common to all the four movements. Why then, if that be the case, does my suite bear the name, precisely, of *Shekherazada?* Because this name and the title *The Arabian Nights* con-

note in everybody's mind the East and fairy-tale wonders; besides, certain details of the musical exposition hint at the fact that all of these are various tales of some one person (which happens to be Shekherazada) entertaining therewith her stern husband.

The rather lengthy, slow introduction of the *Easter Sunday Overture* on the theme of "Let God Arise!" alternating with the ecclesiastical theme "An angel wailed," appeared to me, in its beginning, as it were, the ancient Isaiah's prophecy concerning the resurrection of Christ. The gloomy colours of the Andante lugubre seemed to depict the holy sepulchre that had shone with ineffable light at the moment of the resurrection,—in the transition to the Allegro of the Overture. The beginning of the Allegro, "Let them also that hate Him flee before Him," led to the holiday mood of the Greek orthodox church service on Christ's matins; the solemn trumpet voice of the Archangel was replaced by a tonal reproduction of the joyous, almost dance-like bell-tolling, alternating now with the sexton's rapid reading and now with the conventional chant of the priest's reading the glad tidings of the Evangel. The *obikhod* theme, "Christ is arisen," which forms a sort of subsidiary part of the Overture, appeared amid the trumpet-blasts and the bell-tolling, constituting also a triumphant coda. In this Overture were thus combined reminiscences of the ancient prophecy, of the gospel narrative and also a general picture of the Easter service with its "pagan merry-making." The capering and leaping of the biblical King David before the Ark, do they not give expression to a mood of the same order as the mood of the idol-worshippers' dance? Surely the Russian orthodox *obikhod* is instrumental dance music of the church, is it not? And do not the waving beards of the priests and sextons clad in white vestments and surplices, and intoning "Beautiful Easter" in the tempo of Allegro vivo, etc. transport the imagination to pagan times? And all these Easter loaves and twists and the glowing tapers . . . How far a cry from the philosophic and socialistic teaching of Christ![1] This legendary and heathen side of the holiday, this transition from the gloomy and mysterious

[1] N. A. Sokoloff, a fine and gifted story-teller, once described to me afterwards the following little scene: during Holy Week, on Vladimirskaya Place, a half-drunken snip of a peasant stopped in front of the bell-tower, where all the bells were rung full tilt; at first he kept crossing himself, then became pensive and at last broke out into dancing to the sound and rhythm of the tolling. Truly a spiritual merriment!

evening of Passion Saturday to the unbridled pagan-religious merry-making on the morn of Easter Sunday, is what I was eager to reproduce in my Overture. Accordingly, I requested Count Golyenishcheff-Kootoozoff to write a program in verse,—which he did for me. But I was not satisfied with his poem, and wrote in prose my own program, which same is appended to the published score. Of course in that program I did not explain my views and my conception of the "Bright Holiday," leaving it to tones to speak for me. Evidently these tones do, within certain limits, speak of my feelings and thoughts, for my Overture raises doubts in the minds of some hearers, despite the considerable clarity of the music. In any event, in order to appreciate my Overture even ever so slightly, it is necessary that the hearer should have attended Easter morning-service at least once and, at that, not in a domestic chapel; but in a cathedral thronged with people from every walk of life with several priests conducting the cathedral service,—something that many intellectual Russian hearers, let alone hearers of other confessions, quite lack nowadays. As for myself, I had gained my impressions in my childhood passed near the Tikhvin Monastery itself.

The *Capricco, Shekherazada* and the *Easter Overture* close this period of my activity, at the end of which my orchestration had reached a considerable degree of virtuosity and bright sonority without Wagner's influence, within the limits of the usual make-up of Glinka's orchestra. These three compositions also show a considerable falling off in the use of contrapuntal devices, which is noticeable after *Snyegoorochka.* The place of the disappearing counterpoint is taken by a strong and virtuoso development of every kind of figuration which sustains the technical interest of my compositions. This trend lasted with me for several years longer; but in the orchestration, after the works referred to, there is noticeable a change which I shall speak of in my further narrative.

CHAPTER XXI

1888–92

Production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The *Polonaise* from *Boris Godunoff* with new orchestration. Russian Symphony Concerts. Beginning of *Mlada*. Trip to Paris. Completion of the sketch of *Mlada* and its orchestration. Trip to Brussels. Domestic misfortunes. Quarter-of-a-century jubilee. New tendencies in Byelyayeff's circle. Production of *Prince Igor*. Production of *Mlada* does not take place. Revision of *Maid of Pskov*. Re-orchestrating *Sadko*. Acquaintanceship with Yastryebtseff.

During the season of 1888–89, the Directorate of Imperial Theatres began to lead us a fine dance with the production of *Prince Igor* which had been finished, published and forwarded to the proper authorities. We were led by the nose the following season as well, with constant postponements of production for some reason or other.

In the middle of the season of St. Petersburg's operatic life there occurred a very important event: Neumann, the impresario from Prague, turned up at the Mariinski Theatre with a German opera company to produce Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* under Muck as conductor. All musical St. Petersburg was interested. Glazunoff and I attended the rehearsals, following them score in hand. Muck—an excellent conductor—rehearsed Wagner's works with great care. Our orchestra strove with all their hearts and surprised Muck with their ability in quickly grasping and mastering whatever he demanded. Wagner's method of orchestration struck Glazunoff and me, and thenceforth Wagner's devices gradually began to form a part of our orchestral tricks of the trade. The first application of Wagner's orchestral methods and of an increased orchestra (in the wind-choir) was made in my orchestration of the Polish dance from *Boris Godunoff* for concert performance. As regards orchestration this *Polonaise* was one of the less successful portions of Musorgski's opera.

The composer had first orchestrated it, for the performance of the Polish scene in 1873, almost exclusively for bow instruments. Musorgski conceived the unfortunate and wholly indefensible idea of imitating the "vingt-quatre violons du roi," that is the orchestra of the time of the composer Lully (Louis XIV). What connection there was between this orchestra and the time of the False Dmitri [1] as well as the life of Poland of that period—is incomprehensible. This was one of Musorgski's crotchets. The *Polonaise,* performed in *Boris Godunoff* à la vingt-quatre violons du roi, produced no effect, and for the following year. i. e. for the performance of the opera in its entirety, the composer recast the orchestration. Nevertheless, nothing of consequence resulted from it. Yet, in its music, the *Polonaise* was characteristic and beautiful; for this reason I undertook to turn it into a concert piece, the more so as *Boris Godunoff* was no longer on the boards. I linger on this intrinsically lesser opus of mine, because I attach importance to it, as being my first essay in the new field of orchestration that I had entered therewith.

Der Ring des Nibelungen was given in several subscription cycles, but Wagnerism had not yet taken hold with the St. Peterburg audiences, as it did later, beginning with the close of the Nineties.

During the season of 1888–89, the Russian Symphony Concerts, under my direction, were transferred to the Club of Nobility; they were six in number. *Shekherazada* and the *Easter Overture* were played with success at the concerts of this season. Glazunoff, too, made his bow as conductor of his own compositions. His first essays in this field were by no means brilliant. Slow by nature, maladroit and clumsy of movement, the maestro, speaking slowly and in a low voice, manifestly displayed little ability either for conducting rehearsals or for swaying the orchestra during a concert performance. Nevertheless, the consciousness of the great merits of his compositions induced the orchestra to aid rather than obstruct him. With each fresh appearance, however, he made progress and lost constraint both at rehearsals and concerts. Practice and his own great, incomparable musicianship did their part, and in a few years he had developed into an excellent performer of his own as well as of other people's compositions; in this he was

[1] 1605–6. J. A. J.

helped by the ever-growing authority of his name. When making his first appearance as a conductor he was more fortunate than I in this respect. He knew the orchestra and orchestration better than I had known either at the time of my first appearance; besides, I could guide him and give him advice. As long as I had found it inadvisable to allow him to appear as conductor—he made no appearance, Byelyayeff's pleas to the contrary notwithstanding. As for myself nobody had helped or advised me in my time.

The conducting of concerts and the study of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* did not allow me to concentrate on composition. In addition to orchestrating the *Polonaise,* I also re-orchestrated my *Serbian Fantasy* for the new edition undertaken by Byelyayeff, who had brought it back from the Johansen firm. Not contenting himself with newly appearing works, Byelyayeff bought from the publishers, in addition, as far as possible, the publishing rights to some Russian compositions. Bitner's firm readily surrendered to him my *May Night;* Johansen—the *Serbian Fantasy* and Musorgski's songs. Evidently these firms did not charge him much and were glad to get rid of publications that brought them no profits. But with Bessel's firm the case proved different. The author of *Prince Igor* had incautiously given to Bessel's firm two or three numbers from his opera with the French translations by the Countess Mercy d'Argenteau. After the composer's death, when Byelyayeff had acquired the right to publish the opera and it turned out that the above-mentioned numbers had been published by Bessel already, Byelyayeff had to pay Bessel exactly three thousand rubles in order to buy back these numbers from him, while Bessel had got them from Borodin possibly for nothing.

On the second anniversary of Borodin's death, V. V. Stasoff, Glazunoff, Lyadoff, Byelyayeff, my wife and I gathered in Borodin's former apartment (now occupied by his successor Dianin) in order to spend a few hours together in memory of the dear man and to play various sketches for *Mlada* as well as others that had not found their way into *Prince Igor,* had not been published, or brought into any sort of order. Among these was the finale of *Mlada,* which depicted Morena's exorcism, the inundation, the destruction of the temple and the apotheosis. I must say in passing

that the music of the inundation, composed by Borodin for *Mlada,* had at one time been planned for transfer to the third act of *Prince Igor.* The author had read somewhere that during Igor's flight with Ovloor from the camp of the Polovtsy the Don overflowed its banks and hindered the Polovtsy from pursuing the fugitives. Nevertheless, Borodin gave up this idea, as too minute a detail. On this ground Glazunoff and I had made no use of this material in working over the third act. While glancing over the sketch of this finale I decided to orchestrate it, and subsequently did. In the midst of talk and reminiscence of Borodin, Lyadoff was suddenly struck with the thought that the subject-matter of *Mlada* was exactly suitable for me. He expressed himself to that effect, and, without much reflection, I replied decisively, "Yes, you are right, I shall set out forthwith to work on this opera-ballet." From that moment, my thoughts began to dwell on the proposed subject. Gradually, musical ideas came also, and a few days later there was no doubt that I was composing *Mlada.* I made up my mind not to restrict myself in means but to have in view an increased orchestra like Wagner's in the *Ring.* V. V. Stasoff was delighted with my decision and made quite a to do about it. During spring, the composition began to progress. The missing text was made by myself.

In the summer of 1889, the Paris Universal Exposition took place. Byelyayeff decided to give there two symphonic concerts of Russian music at the Trocadéro Hall, under my direction. Having got in touch with the proper authorities, he arranged the matter and invited Glazunoff, the pianist Lavroff and myself to go with him. Our children were again placed at our summer home in Nyezhgovitsy, under my mother's care, while my wife and I, with Byelyayeff, Glazunoff and Lavroff, left for Paris, expecting to rejoin our families, after the concerts were over, and to spend the rest of the summer at Nyezhgovitsy.

The concerts [1] were set for Saturdays, June 22 and 29, new style. Upon our arrival in Paris, rehearsals commenced. The orchestra, which proved to be excellent, the men being amiable and painstaking, had been borrowed from Colonne. Their playing in the concerts was fine; among the chance shortcomings I re-

[1] cf. Appendix V.

call the oboe-player's mistake in the fourth movement of *Antar*. The success was considerable,[1] with applause aplenty, but the attendance was not large, in spite of the Exposition and the enormous throng of visitors. The immediate cause of this is to be sought in our inadequate advertising. Europe is fond of advertising and needs it, whereas Byelyayeff was an enemy of all réclame. While advertisements of every kind of institution were being displayed at every street-corner, shouted everywhere, carried on people's backs, printed in newspapers in large type,—Byelyayeff confined himself to modest announcements. His reasoning was as follows: whoever is interested will find out and come, and he who does not find out is *ipso facto* not interested; while those who come, because they have nothing else to do, are not wanted at all! With such ideas no large attendance was to be expected. Byelyayeff lost a large sum of money—had expected to do so: but Russian symphonic music was not any the more known, nor had it attracted sufficient attention on the part of Europe and Paris—Byelyayeff could not have desired it. Back of this immediate cause of the incomplete success of the concerts, a cause due to lack of advertising, there lay another radical reason, the insufficient importance of Russian music in the eyes of foreigners. Audiences are incapable of becoming acquainted with the unfamiliar; they welcome only what is known, familiar and fashionable, i. e. again what is known. Art is released from this magic circle

[1] In Alfred Bruneau's *Musiques de Russie* (Bibliothèque-Charpentier; 1903; page 20) that French composer-critic writes: "I made the acquaintance of Rimsky-Korsakoff during the Exposition of 1889, at the Trocadéro, where he gave the first Paris audition of his *Antar*. At this epoch, already distant, the French were only slightly familiar with modern Russian music. *In the Steppes of Central Asia* by Borodin and some other short pieces by Slavic composers had been performed here and there, to be sure, but we were ignorant of the longer works that we are applauding now. M. Rimsky-Korsakoff was our initiator. . . . I came away from the concert full of enthusiasm and, as I was just beginning my career as critic, I wrote the following concerning *Antar*: 'It is necessary to place Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Antar* outside the rank of symphony. It is an instrumental tale in four parts strongly bound together by themes which combine and interlace with extraordinary ease. The composer, here, possesses not only a brilliant palette to which we owe his melancholy ruins, his leaping gazelle, and his heavy black bird. He also paints, in a searching study, the three great human passions: Vengeance, Power, and Love. All that with an incomparable vigour and originality. It is there that the superiority of music shows itself. These three sentiments, each flowing through measures, tonalities and various rhythms over which hovers the leading phrase of Antar, are faithful reflections of our tormented, indecisive, and mysterious souls. Sounds alone can render the infinite mobility of thought. M. Rimsky-Korsakoff has expressed all these profound nuances of the heart in a language which is eloquent, solid, new, and hardy.'" C. V. V.

by two things: tempting advertisements and popular artists. Neither of these two things was on hand this time. The only practical result of the Russian Symphony Concerts at the Exposition was an invitation to me to come to Brussels the following year, although this was rather the out-cropping of the seeds sown there by Countess Mercy d'Argenteau.

In the midst of rehearsals we visited the Exposition. There were also dinners in honour of the Russian musicians at Colonne's house and in the editorial offices of some paper where, after dinner, a loathsome, old, stout operetta diva sang, and my *Capriccio* and Glazunoff's *Styeñka Razin* were played four-hands on a grand piano by Pugno and Messager. We were also invited for a soirée to the Ministre des Beaux-Arts, where we met, among other guests, Massenet with the singer Sanderson and the ancient Ambroise Thomas. Of the musical acquaintances made in Paris I shall also mention Delibes, Mme. Holmès, Bourgault-Ducoudray, Pugno, and Messager. We also made the acquaintance of Michel Delines, subsequently translator of *Onyegin* and of my *Sadko*. With the exception of Delines, all these acquaintanceships proved most superficial. Delibes gave one the impression of a merely amiable gentleman, [1] Massenet of a crafty fox; the composer Mme. Holmès was a very décolletée person; Pugno proved an excellent pianist and reader of music; Bourgault-Ducoudray—a serious musician and bright man; Messager was rather colourless. Saint-Saëns was not in Paris. Delines was a kind man, danced attendance upon us, aided us in many things. All the other transient acquaintances: editors, critics, etc. seemed to me fairly empty babblers. At the Grand Opéra we saw Shakespeare's *Tempest* in Ambroise Thomas's musical setting, and at the Opéra-Comique—Massenet's *Esclarmonde* with Miss Sanderson in the title-rôle. The performance was excellent. In the orchestra of the Opéra-Comique we recognized musicians from Colonne's orchestra, who had played in the Russian Symphony Concerts. The building of the Paris Conservatoire and its library we also went to see.

Of my musical impressions of Paris I shall mention the music in

[1] This is an allusion to the two characters in Gogol's *Revizor;* under the dramatis personae they are denoted as: "A lady pleasant in every respect" and "a merely pleasant lady." J. A. J.

the Hungarian and Algerian cafés, at the Exposition. The virtuoso-playing on the *tsevnitsa* (Pan's pipe) gave me the idea of introducing this ancient instrument in *Mlada* during the scene of dance before the Queen Cleopatra. At the Algerian café, in the dance of a little girl with the dagger, I was captivated by the sudden blows struck by a Negro on the large drum at the dancer's approach. This effect, too, I borrowed for the Cleopatra scene.[1]

Having done with the concerts, my wife and I parted with our friends (who stayed on in Paris) and left for Russia via Vienna, making brief visits at Lucerne and Zurich and going to see Salzburg with Mozart's house, and the salt mines at Salzkammergut and Königsee. Early in July we were already back at Nyezhgovitsy. I immediately set to work on *Mlada*. The final impulse was given by the idea of introducing on the stage, in the scene of Cleopatra's dances, an orchestra consisting of Pan's pipes, lyres glissando, a large drum, small clarinets, etc. The outline of *Mlada* grew by the hour, not by the day, and was finished by September. To be sure, the musical material had been maturing in my head since spring, yet the recording of it all in proper sequence and the working out of details and of the scheme of modulations were done this time particularly fast. The contributing factors were—in the first place, too great laconism of the text (in contrast with Wagner), which I had been unable to develop, so that its dramatic part proved rather weak; in the second place, the Wagnerian system of leading motives had considerably accelerated composing; in the third place, notable absence of contrapuntal writing also helped to speed the work. But to make up for it, my orchestral intentions were novel and ambitious à la Wagner; there was in store for me enormous labour on the orchestral score and it consumed a whole year of my time.

In September we moved to governmental quarters at the Court Chapel. At the house-warming, I had to treat V. V. Stasoff to *yellow tea,* as many years before that he had predicted that he would drink yellow tea in my home at the Court Chapel. On what he had based his prediction—I know not, but here I really found myself at the Chapel, and yellow tea had to be brewed.

[1] This music was employed for the entrance and unveiling of the queen in The Russian Ballet, *Cléopâtre.* C. V. V.

The Russian Symphony Concerts of this season were given again at the Hall of the Club of the Nobility, under my direction, Glazunoff conducting his own compositions. It had been and became thereafter a custom to give invariably at least one composition by Glazunoff at each Russian Symphony concert. The productive author gave no occasion for breaking this rule, and the public began to grow more and more accustomed to his name and appreciative of his talent. Yet his name did not draw audiences, just as the Russian Symphony Concerts' reputation that began to gain a solid footing did not add to the number of followers of the "young Russian school," as the circle of composers centring around Byelyayeff began to be called at that time.

I began the orchestration of *Mlada* with Act III of the opera. When this act was finished, I placed it on the program of the Russian Symphony Concerts and it was performed with Lodi as Yaromir and the opera chorus taking part in the performance. The Pan's pipes were played by the musicians of the Finnish Regiment, the small clarinets—by Afanasyeff and Novikoff, pupils of the Court Chapel and, later, artists of the Court Orchestra. The pipes of Pan had been made upon my order; their glissando caused no slight wonder among the auditors. All in all, my orchestral contrivances hit the mark and the successions of the fantastic colouring of the afterworld, of the flight of shadows and of Mlada's appearance, of the hellishly-ominous appearance of Chernobog, of Cleopatra's oriental bacchanal and of day awakening with the birds—produced a deep impression. I was pleased with the new current that had flowed into my orchestration. As for performance, my contrivances offered no difficulties. Work on the orchestral score of *Mlada* ran smoothly, though the Conservatory, the Court Chapel and the Russian Symphony Concerts took up rather a great deal of my time.

During Lent I received an invitation to come to Brussels to conduct two concerts of Russian music. I accepted the offer and left at the end of Lent. It turned out that my invitation to Brussels had been occasioned by the refusal on the part of Joseph Dupont, the permanent conductor of the Symphony Concerts at Brussels, to lead during that season, owing to some unpleasantness with the Directors. It had been decided to invite foreigners. Besides me, the invitation had been extended also to Edvard Grieg,

Hans Richter, I believe, and some one else. I met with a kindly reception in Brussels. Joseph Dupont, who had not completely withdrawn from the concerts, but had merely refused to direct them, gave me every possible assistance. I met all the prominent musicians of Belgium: Gevaert, Edgar Tinel, Huberti, Radoux, etc. They invited me everywhere, they dined and they wined me in cabarets. There were two concerts with six rehearsals apiece, including the general rehearsal to which the public was admitted. Among other pieces the following were performed: Borodin's First Symphony; *Antar; Capriccio Espagnol; Introduction* and *Entr'actes* from Cui's *Le Filibustier;* Glazunoff's *Poème Lyrique;* the Overture to *Ruslan and Lyudemila;* Balakireff's *Russian Overture; A Night on Bald Mount.* The rehearsals took place at the hall, the concerts at the Théâtre de la Monnaie. The houses were full, and the success was pronounced. I was presented with a wreath. The concerts attracted Belgian musicians from other cities—Liège, Malignes, etc. In Brussels I had the good fortune to hear *Der Fliegende Holländer,* to see the Conservatoire museum, to hear Gevaert play the spinets and clavecines, and also to become acquainted with the oboe d'amore. The Belgians parted friends with me.

On returning to St. Petersburg I found my wife ill with a dangerous inflammation of the throat. Soon my son Andrey also fell ill. Spring passed in worry and dread. For the summer, we moved to Nyezhgovitsy again. In the winter our family gained one more member: in December, 1889, a son, Slavchik, was born to us. My mother (87 years old) felt exceedingly feeble, yet expressed a desire to live with us, and I brought her to the summer home.

By the way, before the summer, I had managed to orchestrate the finale of Borodin's *Mlada* for publication, and during the entire summer I was engaged in orchestrating my own *Mlada* which I intended to finish in the fall. Work on it progressed.

In August, my mother had to be removed to St. Petersburg, that we might call in medical aid for her. However, in spite of all measures we could take, she rapidly sank and soon died, because of mere old age. After burying her at the Smolyenskoye cemetery, we spent the remaining days at Nyezhgovitsy and then removed to St. Petersburg. Bad luck pursued the family: in

December little Slavchik fell ill and died, and later Masha, too, was taken ill.

December 19, 1890, marked twenty-five years of my activity as composer (since the production of my First Symphony). My friends decided to celebrate my jubilee. Byelyayeff got up a concert of my works at the Hall of the Club of the Nobility, under the direction of Dütsch and Glazunoff. The numbers performed were: The First Symphony, *Antar,*[1] the Concerto for the piano (Lavroff), the *Easter Overture.* Songs had also been scheduled (Fride); of them, the song *The Fir tree and the Palm,* orchestrated by me shortly before that, was published in orchestral score as a surprise to me. Unfortunately, owing to Fride's sudden illness, the songs could not be given. There were also played *Glorifications,* composed by Glazunoff and Lyadoff for this occasion. One had been written by Glazunoff on the Russian theme *"Slava."* The audience was rather large; there were numerous calls for me, presentations, speeches, wreaths, etc. They came to my house with congratulations and addresses. I was greeted by the Conservatory with Rubinstein at the head, Balakireff with the Chapel, etc. In answer to all these honours, we gave a dinner at home to our more intimate friends. The guests were many and the dinner was lively and without constraint. The only one who failed to accept our invitation was Balakireff with whom I had had a falling out over some trifling matter shortly after the jubilee festivities. When I went to invite M. A. to my house, he replied in a hard cold voice: "No! I won't come to dinner at *your* house." Relations between us grew worse ever after and finally came to a complete break.

In the winter or spring of 1891 Chaykovski came to St. Petersburg on quite a long visit, and from then dated his closer intimacy with Byelyayeff's circle, particularly with Glazunoff, Lyadoff and myself. In the years following, Chaykovski's visits became quite frequent. Sitting around in restaurants till three in the morning with Lyadoff, Glazunoff and others usually put a finishing touch to the time spent together. Chaykovski could drink a great deal of wine and yet keep his full powers, both physical and mental; but few could keep up with him in this respect. In their company

[1] By the way, A. G. Rubinstein, on hearing *Antar,* expressed himself: "It is *ballet* music."

Laroche began to appear more and more frequently. I avoided Laroche to the best of my ability and as a rule dawdled very little in restaurants, leaving long before the rest. At this time there begins to be noticeable a considerable cooling off and even somewhat inimical attitude towards the memory of the "mighty *koochka*" of Balakireff's period. On the contrary a worship of Chaykovski and a tendency toward eclecticism grow ever stronger. Nor could one help noticing the predilection (that sprang up then in our circle) for Italian-French music of the time of wig and farthingale, music introduced by Chaykovski in his *Pikovaya Dama* (Queen of Spades) and *Yolanta*. By this time quite an accretion of new elements and young blood had accumulated in Byelyayeff's circle. New times—new birds, new birds—new songs.

During his visit in 1891 Chaykovski came once to our house; Byelyayeff, Glazunoff and others were also there. Unbidden, Laroche dropped in and stayed through the whole evening. However, Nadyezhda Nikolayevna treated him so stiffly that he never came again.

On October 23, 1890, *Prince Igor* was produced at last, rehearsed fairly well by K. A. Kuchera, as Napravnik had declined the honour of conducting Borodin's opera. Both Glazunoff and I were pleased with our orchestration and additions. The cuts later introduced by the Directorate in Act III of the opera did it considerable harm. The unscrupulousness of the Mariinski Theatre subsequently went to the length of omitting Act III altogether. Taken all in all, the opera was a success and attracted ardent admirers, particularly among the younger generation.

At one of the six Russian Symphony Concerts, the third act of my *Mlada* was performed anew. After its publication by Byelyayeff, *Mlada* was submitted by me to Director of Theatres, Vsyevolozhski. Becoming interested in its scenery, he immediately agreed to produce it and faithfully promised to carry out all my conditions to make no cuts, to procure all necessary instruments and, in general, scrupulously to follow out my directions as author.

In the summer of 1891 I turned my hand to *Pskovityanka*. Its first version was unsatisfactory to me, the second—still more so. I made up my mind to revise my opera; I meant to keep closely to its first version in general, without increasing its bulk and yet replace parts that did not satisfy me, with corresponding portions

borrowed from the second version. The place of honour among these borrowings belonged to the scene of Olga with Vlasyevna prior to Tsar Ivan's entry. Chetvyortka Tyerpigoreff of the second version was to be done away with, Nikola Salos likewise, and so were the wandering pilgrims. The thunder-storm and the Tsar's hunting party I intended to retain, but only as a stage tableau before the G-major chorus of the girls. The Tsar's talk with Styosha during the entertainment I planned to introduce into my new revision, but the final chorus I left in its original form, save that I meant to develop it somewhat. The entire orchestration with its natural-scale brass was good for nothing, and the opera was to be orchestrated on a new principle, partly with Glinka's orchestra, partly with Wagner's.

During my entire activity as composer, now one and now another subject attracted my attention from time to time, without, however, actually coming to realization. Thus the subjects of *Tsarskaya Nyevyesta* (The Tsar's Bride), *Servilia* and *Sadko* had flitted before me more than once, tempting me to turn my hand to them. Before the summer of 1891 the subject of *Zoryushka* (Daybreak or A Night at the Cross-roads) had preoccupied me, but not for long; yet some musical ideas, that proved of use subsequently, had begun to germinate in connection with the subject.

The summer of 1891 we spent abroad, as Masha's illness made it necessary. We lived in Switzerland, on the Sonnenberg near Lucerne, in Engelberg, at Lugano and again on the Sonnenberg. I did no work at all during the whole summer, unless it be an attempt to orchestrate some songs,—quite unsuccessfully, however. Our trip abroad brought no relief to our poor dear little girl.

The production of *Mlada* did not take place during the season of 1891–92. The choral portions were being rehearsed, but for the rest—we were being deceived. Moreover, Napravnik fell ill. In order not to delay the matter, I proposed to him to conduct in person the "weeding out" rehearsals of the orchestra, and two of these took place. The scenic artists maintained that between the scenes of Chernobog and the Cleopatra scene no dexterous scene-shifting was possible if directions were followed as indicated in the score. Feeling tired and incapable of further work on the composition of *Mlada,* I requested Glazunoff to write an intermezzo on my themes,—so as not to interrupt the music during the

change of scenery. Glazunoff consented and skilfully composed an intermezzo by cleverly adapting himself to my style. Subsequently, however, this intermezzo was not used, as it was found possible to shift scenery in a moment, and my original plan was adhered to. Napravnik recovered, but the production of *Mlada* was postponed until the ensuing season. To make up for it, during Lent, at the concert of the Directorate of Imperial Theatres, the entire third act was given under Napravnik's leadership; its success, however, was not overwhelming. Along with it was given Napravnik's *Don Juan* [1]—a tedious, uninteresting and interminable composition.

The Russian Symphony Concerts ran their course. I was engaged on *The Maid of Pskov* and, in addition, orchestrated anew the entire second scene of *Boris Godunoff* (The Coronation Scene), which was the cornerstone in my further revision of Musorgski's work,—undertaken later. At the end of the season I did one more piece of work: I rewrote the orchestration of my *Sadko* (tone-poem). With this revision I settled accounts with the past. In this way, not a single larger work of mine *of the period antedating May Night* remained unrevised.

My acquaintance with V. V. Yastryebtseff, an ardent admirer of mine, dates approximately from this time. Introduced to me at a concert, he gradually visited me more and more frequently, recording (as proved afterwards) his talks with me, the ideas expressed by me, etc. in the form of memoirs. In his library he had all my compositions in full scores; he collected my autographs, and knew by heart well-nigh every little note in them,—at all events every interesting harmony. The time of the beginning and completion of each of my compositions was recorded by him with the greatest care. In the company of acquaintances, constant and passing, he was a fervent partisan of my compositions and my defender against every variety of critical onslaught. During the first years of our intimacy he was also a violent Berliozist. Subsequently this passion of his died down considerably and gave way to a worship of Wagner.[2]

[1] Incidental music to Alyeksey Tolstoy's drama *Don Juan*, op. 54, 1891 (solo, chorus orchestra, declamation). Of Tolstoy's *Trilogy*, one *Tsar Ivan the Terrible* was played in New York (March 1, 1904) by Richard Mansfield, and *Tsar Fyodor* by Orlyenyeff and Nazimova, in Russian, (1905). J. A. J.

[2] Florence, August 8, 1906.

CHAPTER XXII

1892–93

Studying æsthetics and philosophy. Production of *Mlada*. *Yolanta*. "Friendly" dinner. Weariness and ill-health. Production of *Snyegoorochka* in Moscow. Altani. *May Night* on a private stage. Leoncavallo. Safonoff. Impressions of visit to Moscow. Russian Symphony Concerts. Krooshevski. *Ruslan and Lyudmila* anniversary.

The summer of 1892 I spent with my whole family at Nyezhgovitsy without leaving it once. Of my task with *Pskovityanka* there remained to revise the overture and the closing chorus, and that I did in the course of three or four weeks of stay in the country. This work I did very unwillingly, feeling a sort of weariness and aversion for it. Nevertheless, thanks to my being an experienced hand, the revised overture was rather successful, and the thought of adding "Olga's chords" at the end of the closing chorus can only be called felicitous. As before, I left the chorus in E flat major; I transposed the overture to the key of C-minor; I completely re-orchestrated and changed the end, substituting more decent music for the barbarous dissonances of the first version. I was also in a hurry to finish the work on *The Maid of Pskov* for the reason that I was more and more absorbed in the thought of writing a comprehensive article or even a book about Russian music and about Borodin's, Musorgski's and my own compositions. Strange as it may seem, the thought of writing a critical estimate of myself pursued me persistently. I began. But my work was to be preceded by a lengthy introduction embracing general æsthetic theses to which I should be able to make a reference. I jotted it down rather rapidly, but immediately and of my own accord perceived great shortcomings and gaps and tore it up. Then I set out to read: I read Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen,* Ambros's *Die Grenzen der Poesie und Musik* and La Mara's biographies of great composers. Reading Hanslick I was nettled at that writer of slight wit and exceeding paradox. This reading aroused in me

once more the desire to proceed with my article. I began, but the thing grew more and more bulky than before. I fell to delving into general æsthetics and the treatment of all the arts in general. From all the arts I was to pass to music and from this latter—to the music of the Young Russian School in particular. While working on this, the feeling grew on me that I lacked not only philosophic and æsthetic training, but even familiarity with the most necessary terms of the subject. Once more I threw up my work and turned to reading Lewes's *History of Philosophy*. In intervals between reading I jotted down brief articles on Glinka and Mozart, on conductors and musical education, etc. All of this proved clumsy and immature. Reading Lewes, I made transcripts from the book and from the philosophic doctrines he quoted and also recorded my own ideas. For days at a stretch I pondered these matters, turning my fragmentary thoughts this way and that. But lo and behold! one fine morning, at the end of August or the beginning of September, I was overtaken by an extreme lassitude accompanied by a sort of rush to my head and utter confusion of thinking. I was frightened in real earnest, and the first few days even lost my appetite completely. When I told my wife of it, she, of course, urged me to give up all work. I did so, and until we left for St. Petersburg, read nothing whatever, but walked the livelong day, taking care not to remain alone. Whenever I did remain alone, unpleasant obtrusive, fixed ideas persistently crept into my head. I thought of religion and of humble reconciliation with Balakireff. However, the walks and the rest helped, and I moved to St. Petersburg quite myself again. But I had grown altogether cold to music, and the thought of occupying myself with philosophic education pursued me unremittingly. Against Dr. T. I. Bogomoloff's advice, I began to read a great deal. I had a text-book of logic, and Herbert Spencer's Philosophy, Spinoza, the æsthetic works of Guyot and Hennequin, various histories of philosophy, etc. Nearly every day I bought books and read them, jumped from one to the other, scribbled their margins with notes, meanwhile unceasingly pondering, pondering, making memoranda and writing notes. I conceived a desire to write a magnum opus on the æsthetics of the musical art. For the time being, the Russian School was shouldered aside. But instead of

æsthetics I was straying into general metaphysics, for fear lest I begin too near and too superficially. And more and more frequently very unpleasant sensations began to recur in my head: something like fluxes, or possibly refluxes, perhaps dizziness, but most likely a weight and pressure. These sensations, which went hand in hand with various fixed ideas, greatly oppressed and frightened me.

However, I found some diversion in the production of *Mlada* at the Mariinski Theatre. Quite energetic rehearsals of my opera commenced at the beginning of the theatrical season, and I was invited to the rehearsals, choral and orchestral. Even as early as September the choruses sang well; the only thing that offered difficulties in the way of commitment to memory was the idol-worshippers' chorus of Act IV, owing to its constant change of measures (⅝, ¾, ⅝, etc.). Napravnik kept me uneasy with fear that, with all its willingness, the chorus would be unable to memorize that number. At one of the choral drills, when an attempt had been made to sing it by heart, one of the best choristers—Myel'nichenko (tenor)—lost his way and dragged others with him. Napravnik laid great stress on this occurrence. Pomazanski and Kazachenko, the chorus-masters, assured me that Napravnik exaggerated and that the chorus could be memorized, —which presently proved the fact; I myself had never had any misgivings on that score. In the opera lobby, where the united choral rehearsals were held, the voices rang beautifully, the closing chorus of bright angels being given particularly well and with great zeal. At one of the rehearsals an incipient scandal occurred: instead of the words: *chookh, chookh!* (Hear! Hear!) the choristers began to sing: *choosh, choosh!* (Nonsense, nonsense!). I remarked to them that I did not doubt at all that it really was great nonsense, but nevertheless I should ask them to sing what was written. As if to apologize for the men's lack of tact, the women of the chorus began to applaud me after the rehearsal was over. Still I was told that the next day the chorus had received a good wigging from the stage-manager.

As Mme. Litvin[1] had left, the solo parts were distributed as

[1] Felia Litvinne, sister-in-law of Edouard de Reszke, sang in New York in 1885–6 (as Litvinoff) and 1896–97. For a considerable period she was the principal dramatic soprano at the Paris Opéra. J. A. J.

follows: Voyslava—Sonki; Loomir—Dolina; Yaromir—Mikhayloff; Mstivoy—Stravinski and Koryakin. Mme. Sonki asserted that in her part in Act IV there were some awkward moments, and that it was an achievement for a songstress to take the high C sharp in Act II. With a voice like hers it was, of course, shameful to talk like that, and yet I had to make a slight, imperceptible change for her benefit. I stated to G. P. Kondratyeff, head stage-manager, that no substitutes had been assigned for the parts of Voyslava and Yaromir and that the opera might be the sufferer on that account. However, none could be found for the tenor part: for Figner the rôle was considered unsuitable for some reason, and why Myedvyedyeff [1] had not been assigned the part—I know not; but, at my suggestion, a substitute for Voyslava's part was found in Mme. Ol'gina, and this rôle, fateful C sharp and all, proved easy for her. At rehearsals, Krooshevski accompanied on the piano, while Napravnik followed, orchestral score in hand. This time I declined to play the accompaniments (not as I had done at the productions of *May Night* and *Snyegoorochka*) as I felt that latterly I had grown altogether unaccustomed to the piano. Soon the orchestral rehearsals, too, began. Napravnik called two preliminary rehearsals: one for the strings, the other for the wind-instruments alone; then followed three general rehearsals of the whole orchestra and later the singers also were added. Altogether there were not more than five or six rehearsals for the orchestra with the singers. As a detector of false notes, Napravnik was inimitable as usual, but he laid insufficient stress on shading and detailed polish, alleging lack of time. On this occasion, however, I had no quarrel with him as regards tempi; whether I had pleased with my tempi, or whether he was willing to carry out my directions exactly—I do not know, but he was amiable and charming to me in general, evincing if anything a certain liking for my composition. And things at the Russian Opera really did everlastingly shape themselves in such a manner that time was indeed lacking. Singers constantly falling ill and, consequently, changes of repertory necessitated thereby demanded innumerable extra rehearsals of old

[1] A dramatic tenor who (with voice half gone) visited New York in 1898 and gave (on the East Side) performances of *La Juive, Otell, Carmen* and *Samson et Dalila* that were among the most memorable I have seen. J. A. J.

operas. Eternal haste, five performances a week, a stage that is not always free for rehearsals, being often occupied by the ballet, —all these take time from quiet and sedulous rehearsals, such as are required for proper artistic execution. Moreover, above all this there often reigns at the Mariinski Theatre a spirit of presumptuousness, routine and weariness, in conjunction with fine technique and experience. Singers, choir and orchestra all consider themselves first, hors concours, and, secondly, experienced artists who have seen enough in their lives, whom nothing can take aback and who are weary of everything, nevertheless feel they will manage quite well, even though it is not worth while to tire oneself too much for it. This spirit often crops out through all outward courtesy and even cordiality, when theatrical impresarios, warmly pressing the composer's hand, tell him how much pains they have taken on his behalf. I suppose that at Bayreuth, and Bayreuth only, matters stand differently, thanks to the Wagner-cult that has developed. Be that as it may, nobody can so quickly grow tired, fall into routine and think he has fathomed all mysteries, as do the native Russians and with them those foreigners who have grown up with us in Russia. Imagine how astonished Conductor Muck was, when, having produced in St. Petersburg *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with only six orchestral rehearsals for each of the four lyric dramas (abroad they have from twenty to thirty of them) he saw that in the first cycle of Wagner's work everything went perfectly, in the second cycle— worse, in the third—downright slovenly, etc., instead of improving as the composition became more familiar. The cause of this lay in the fact that in the early days the orchestra had striven to show off before a conductor from abroad and really had shown off; while during the subsequent cycles, self-confidence, routine and weariness got the upper hand even of the spell of Wagner's name. The orchestral and general rehearsals of *Mlada* went safely; the orchestra did not drown the voices, the orchestration proved full of colour, varied and individual,—I was pleased with it. Only the Pan-pipes were not up to the mark in sound, and that, too, I imagine, was due to the exasperating acoustics of the Mariinski Theatre. Soon the scenery was being added; to my mind it appeared handsome, but the effects of various lightings and tableaux could not be called altogether

successful. The stage rehearsals in conjunction with the scenic effects proved very complicated and required many repetitions. In the midst of this I had two surprises: one a pleasant one, the other quite the reverse. The pleasant one was that the shifting of the first scene in Act III (mountain pass) to Cleopatra's Hall was made instantaneously, as I had planned while composing; hence it was found possible to omit the intermezzo that had been written by Glazunoff to gain time for the slow change of scenery, and the soft chord of D flat major (9/8), with which Cleopatra's scene begins, came in immediately after Chernobog's exorcism ("Appear, O Cleopatra!") and the crash of the tamtam. This sudden change of mood and colouring—after the spirits' wild shouts and Chernobog's conjuration in utter darkness, a soft purple light illumining the Egyptian Hall which gradually emerges from obscurity—has always seemed to me one of the most poetic moments of *Mlada*. The unpleasant surprise was as follows: the scenery of the final apotheosis was so arranged that it was impossible to start the procession of the bright gods and spirits of light through the clouds, and it was necessary to content oneself with a motionless tableau. As a result, the closing chorus proved too long, as the scene was tedious and annoyingly monotonous. It was impossible to remodel the scenery, and I was obliged to make a considerable cut in the closing chorus; this grieved me in the extreme. And all of it occurred, because, at the Russian Imperial Opera, the scene-painter's department, the costumes, the machinery, and the stage-management, and the music run each for itself, and in the Directorate there is no person to unify them all. Each of these departments knows only itself and is ready to play a trick on the others rather than attune itself to them. When the time comes to produce an opera and to "reduce everything to a common denominator," it turns out that many things don't dovetail; and still every one considers himself free from responsibility for the actions of others. Even though the production of *Mlada* had been preceded as early as the year before by a meeting of the heads of the various departments; but at one sitting it is impossible to clear up everything, and, besides, many things were forgotten.

Thus, in spite of my stern warnings in the preface of *Mlada,* where I requested that no cuts be made or that my opera be set

over altogether[1], a cut had to be made after all. The only conclusion to be drawn from that is that no words and no prohibitions whatever will avail, if it is impossible to hail one into a court of justice for violating the conditions. Now, the Directorate of the Imperial Theatres cannot be hailed into a court, and, therefore, it behooves a composer to be gentle and meek. Richard Wagner would have given it to them one and all in Germany, if a trick like this had been played on him!

The productions of operas at the Mariinski Theatre lack a sufficient number of complete rehearsals. Now the orchestra men are all on hand, but the singers sing half-voice; now orchestra and singers function properly, but the scenery is lacking, because there is to be a performance in the evening, and there is no time to make the change; again the scenery is in place, but the lighting is out of order, or the rehearsal is held to the accompaniment of a piano, etc. And yet it is necessary that an opera, and particularly one so fantastic and complicated as *Mlada,* be rehearsed many times with full stage settings. Only then can all stage-scenes and changes be fitted to the corresponding bars of music and, morever, the groupings of singers be properly arranged so that the voices produce the desired effect in accordance with the acoustic properties of the theatre and, if necessary, the change

[1] As a preface to *Mlada,* where music and dance alternate in the most remarkable manner, Rimsky-Korsakoff placed a list of directions which are worthy of a place side by side with the famous notes that Berlioz made for his *Les Troyens:* "Should the firemen be afraid of fire, the machinists of water, the theatre-managers of everything together, this symphonic intermezzo should be stricken out"; or: "I indicate here this cut, being fully aware of the feeling of happiness that inspires managers, singers and conductors, firemen, machinists and illuminators, whenever they can insult an author and down his work; I should feel unhappy, if I did not, to the utmost of my powers, contribute to the gratification of such noble instincts." Along with the painful irony of the Frenchman one may appreciate the imperious masterfulness of the Slav: "The opera must be given without cuts or abbreviations: 1) because it will not fatigue any one, thanks to its brevity (two and one quarter hours of music); 2) because the author has thoroughly weighed his intentions. The composer permits no change in individual parts; the orchestral, choral and solo parts have been written in a form that is fully practicable. He wishes that every species of various noises on the stage (such as thunder, wind, etc.) be avoided, as only the orchestra and it alone has to imitate those sounds. He attaches great importance to the descriptive portions of his music; hence he does not permit the slightest deviation from his ideas in this regard." . . .

Cuts, it may be stated, pursued Rimsky-Korsakoff throughout his career, in spite of his horror of them. Since his death his widow has protested against the performance of *Shekherazada and Le Coq d'Or* as ballets. Recently the *Chant Hindou* from the opera *Sadko* has been made into a fox-trot and used for dancing. C. V. V.

made in certain dynamic nuances in the singing of the chorus, in accordance with those same acoustic conditions. Such joint rehearsing is not at all in vogue at the Mariinski Theatre. Thanks to it, many things in *Mlada* turned out differently from what I had intended. For instance, in Act I, the chorus accompanying the appearance of the goddess Lada and placed, according to my intentions, on high, among the rafters, was hardly audible; the orchestration, transparent as it was in this passage, had to be hastily abated. The chorus behind the scenes, which accompanies the appearance of the shades in Act IV, missed fire completely, because the very appearance of the shades had not been tried out until the dress-rehearsal proper, and the choir had been placed too deep in the wings. The closing chorus lost much, because the choristers could not be placed near the proscenium and they, too, had to be shoved into the wings. In general, among the shortcomings in the productions at the Mariinski Theatre must be counted the fact that the chorus people who sing with finesse and shading at the rehearsals in the lobby, forget the shading and begin to sing roughly on emerging upon the stage, and yet no proper attention is paid to it. During the scenic rehearsals, O. O. Palyechek, the chorus-régisseur, showed special zeal, incessantly leaping on a chair and indicating the proper moments to the choristers. Thanks to his efforts, many choral scenes went off vividly and naturally, especially the market scene in Act II. The handling of the dances and of the mimetic movements was poor as a whole. The ballet-masters Ivanoff and Ceccheti usually do not know the music to which they fit the dances they put on, and if the music is not of the routine ballet type, they don't understand it at all. Despite the detailed directions given by me in the piano-score, they looked into it too late, it seems to me. As in ancient days, the ballet rehearsals are usually conducted to the playing of two violins which are to translate the entire orchestra. The music becomes almost unrecognizable not to the ballet-master alone, but even to the musicians themselves; hence the character of the movements invented by the ballet-masters is invariably ill-suited to the character of the music. To the accompaniment of a heavy forte —graceful movements are put on, to a light pianissimo—ponderous

leaps; the short notes of melodic runs are thumped out with the feet with a zeal worthy of a better fate. Of all the dances, only the Hindu dance, thanks to the dancer Skorsyuk, a lively vigorous artist of the Gipsy type, as well as the groups of shades, elegantly arranged by the ballet-master Ceccheti,—met with success. But, on the other hand, Ceccheti failed utterly with the dances and groupings in the scene in Cleopatra's chamber. The combination of two simultaneous dances, one slow and passionate, the other—rapid and frenzied, missed fire completely, since Ceccheti had not grasped at all the combination of two contrasting rhythms in the music. Nor were happier results attained with the *khorovod* (*kolo* of Act II) which proved monotonous and boring in the production. Ceccheti was amusing at the tentative ballet rehearsals. He ran about, capered, made faces to represent the devil, his head bound with a handkerchief which soaked up the sweat that ran like beads of hail down his face. I doubt that Mme. M. M. Petipa, who played the shade of Mlada, knew and understood her rôle or was letter perfect in the verses that explained the purport of her performance. Her appearance at the beginning of Act III had not been settled finally even as late as the dress-rehearsal. She made her entry now at the right, now at the left; now on the rock and now below it. The difficulty was how to place Yaromir (who followed her) in such a manner that he might be heard distinctly. Instead of rehearsing this scene separately several times, Mlada's entry was changed at every rehearsal, and each time the result was precipitate and incoherent. The persistent thought of "not delaying rehearsals" is uppermost in every one's mind, and hence the lack of finish in the production.

At one of the last rehearsals Mikhayloff, who had caught cold, grew hoarse and began to sing half-voice. At the dress-rehearsal (to which the public was admitted) the same thing happened. In the matter of mise-en-scène the dress-rehearsal was very shaky. In Act IV, the shades, instead of vanishing, fairly ran off, as the stage was not sufficiently dark. The musical part went off without a hitch. The theatre was crowded, but the success was slight and approval inaudible. After the dress-rehearsal there was to be another, at which the Tsar and the Imperial family were expected. But the Tsar did not come, for some reason, and the rehearsal was the usual one, with interruptions. The first perform-

ance took place on October 20th, a non-subscription night. The house was full. My family and I sat in a first tier box on the left side. As usual, the whole musical world was present at the theatre. After the introduction (played fairly well) meagre applause was heard. The first act met with a rather chilly reception. Sonki sang Voyslava. Mikhayloff, a sick man, had to force himself to sing in order not to have the performance cancelled. After the second act loud clamours broke out: "The composer!" I came before the footlights several times and was presented with a huge wreath which V. V. Stasoff had, of course, arranged for. After the third act, as well as at the end of the opera, there were numerous curtain calls for me. I came out alone, then with the artists and presently with Napravnik. Behind the scenes the usual hand-shakings, expressions of gratitude and wishes for success bubbled forth. I have spoken of the shortcomings in the producing and rehearsing; the performance as a whole was rather smooth. The opera ended early. After it was over, V. V. Stasoff, Byelyayeff, Lyadoff, Trifonoff, Glazunoff and other close friends gathered at my house.

The second performance of *Mlada* was called off, because Mikhayloff had grown very ill. Then, after a lengthy interval, it was given in turn to all the three sets of subscribers without any success. There were no curtain-calls for me, and very few for the artists. Then, after a long lapse, it was given once or twice with considerable success to non-subscribers. At one of the performances Krooshevski conducted, and quite correctly, though without preparation, in place of Napravnik, who had fallen ill. The majority of the newspaper reviews of *Mlada* were unfavourable, while many reviews were downright hostile. By the way, Solovyoff, as had been his wont, inflicted a very ill-disposed critical article upon me. I believe for the most sympathetic review I was indebted to young Gaydebooroff (once a pupil of Musorgski's), the music critic of the *Nyedyelya* (*The Week*). Many (like the *Novoye Vremya,* for instance) imputed Mikhayloff's illness to the difficulties and clumsiness in the rôle of Yaromir; in one humorous magazine I was rather amusingly represented as driving a carriage drawn by devils.[1]

The season-subscription audiences, indifferent to art, sleepy,

[1] Yalta, June 10, 1893.

stolid and haunting the theatre only because of besetting habit, that they might be seen and chatter of everything but music,—they were all bored to the very death by my opera. As for the non-subscribers, it was given for them only twice, and why—the Lord alone knows! Perhaps because the artists had scant success in it, as well as because His Majesty's Court had shown no interest whatever: the expected visit of the Emperor at the final performance had not materialized; only the Tsarina and her children came. Nor had the Tsar attended any rehearsal, despite his habit of coming with the entire court to dress-rehearsals. As I had been told, the Minister of His Majesty's Court had not found my opera to his liking, and that is of supreme importance in the eyes of the Directorate. The newspaper reviews had belittled *Mlada* to the best of their abilities in the eyes of the public, whose musical brain-centres are saturated and supersaturated with the "Figner-cult." Evidently, on the basis of all this, an impression was created that *Mlada* was not much of a composition, and this opinion of the majority has probably been established for a long time to come, hence I don't by any means expect success for my opera in the nearest future, nor indeed at any time at all, for that matter. There is also this opinion current: "What under the sun have we to do with all these gods, spirits, devils; let us have drama and drama, let us have living human beings!" In other words: "Let us have mellifluous singing with high notes and gasping parlandos in between."

Be that as it may, it turned out that my opera was given an unprecedently small number of times for a first season, although all performances brought good houses. At the end of the season it might have been given several times, but Chaykovski's *Yolanta* and Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* interfered. The rehearsals of these operas were attended by the Imperial family, and both Figner and Medea [1] sang in them—so everything was fine. *Cavalleria Rusticana* I did not hear, but *Yolanta* I heard at a rehearsal and found it one of Chaykovski's feeblest compositions. To my mind, everything in it is unsuccessful—beginning with impudent

[1] Nikolay Figner, with a rather dry tenor voice of mezzo-carattere, but of unusual finesse and interpretative abilities, and his wife, Medea Mey (an Italian by birth), a soprano of extraordinary quality, a strikingly beautiful woman of burning temperament and supreme dramatic gifts, were the reigning favourites of the Imperial Opera House (1887–1903). Medea Mey sang in Buenos-Ayres (1903). J. A. J.

borrowings like Rubinstein's melody *Otvoritye mnye tyemnitsu* (Open wide my dungeon cell) and ending with the orchestration, which in this particular case Chaykovski somehow had written topsy-turvy: music suitable for strings had been allotted to wind-instruments, and vice-versa, and hence it occasionally sounds even fantastic in the most unsuitable passages (the introduction, for instance, scored for some unknown reason for the wind-instruments alone).

During this season, I rarely took a peep behind the wings of the Mariinski Theatre after the production of *Mlada;* I had no desire to keep my memory green, though the artists were amiable and kind to me in the same old way. Apparently, after the production of *Mlada* the artists gave me a place in the ranks of "real-honest-to-goodness" composers; that was evident at least from the fact that soon after the first performance of *Mlada,* the artists invited my wife and me to a "friendly" dinner at the restaurant "Myed-vyed'." Pogozheff himself also attended the dinner. Napravnik, being ill, did not come. The dinner went off in a somewhat formal fashion: the first toast, drunk to the health of His Majesty the Emperor, was accompanied with the singing of the national anthem *Bozhe Tsarya khrani* (God save the Tsar!), Koryakin's voice dwarfing all others. Then followed all sorts of toasts—to the success of the opera, to the performers, etc. By the way, in his speech, Pogozheff called *Mlada* an archæological opera, for reasons best known to himself, while Figner and Medea asked me to write an opera "for them." In this connection, I must mention that at one of the rehearsals of *Mlada,* Figner had taken me aside and told me that nothing would please him better than to sing in my *May Night* and that he had spoken to Kondratyeff and Napravnik, but they had said that *May Night* could be produced only provided I rewrote the third act. I told Figner that I should be pleased to have him sing in *May Night,* but I did not see any need of rewriting Act III; and that I was surprised at Kondratyeff and Napravnik—and what they wanted with it. That ended the conversation.

The production of *Mlada* did not by any means spur me to further composing, and I kept reading and jotting down various notes. Fatigue and unpleasant headaches came more frequently. Yielding to the pleas of my wife and Alyeksandr Pavlovich Dianin,

I consulted Dr. Erlitski, who ordered complete rest and physical exercise as well as certain medicines. I gave up reading; but, possessing no inclination for manual labour, contented myself with long walks, meanwhile regularly taking the medicines. I confess that my condition depressed me. By fits and starts I would do a little reading: but it tired me and caused pressure in my head; thereupon, sinking into despondency, I dropped my reading again. However, the abstinence from reading, as well as the walks were of benefit to me, and a trip to Moscow to see the production of *Snyegoorochka* diverted me particularly. Having heard from Moscow that nothing was known there concerning the production of the opera, I believed that it had been called off altogether. Yet in January I received an invitation from Altani to come to the two final rehearsals and the first performance, announced for January 26th. After brief reflection I left, and, directly from the train, went to the theatre. The rehearsal had already started. Altani halted it, and, after presenting me to the artists, recommenced from the very beginning. *Snyegoorochka* was given in its entirety, without cuts. The impression of the rehearsal was most pleasant to me. Snyegoorochka (Mme. Eichenwald) and Koopava (Mme. Sionitskaya) were very fine; all the others were quite fair; the orchestra had been drilled with great care, the tempi, in the majority of cases, were correct, and not those of St. Petersburg; the chorus did some acting while singing on the stage, with a close attention to nuances that one looked for in vain in St. Petersburg; the acoustics were splendid. Two days later the dress-rehearsal took place. The performance was fine, the scenery sufficiently handsome, but the metamorphoses and entries in Act III were nothing to brag about. The costumes were middling fair. Evidently in the decorative domain Moscow is weaker and more primitive than St. Petersburg. Among the interpreters some were excellent and some good; but the opera had been studied finely. The orchestra which is probably inferior to that of St. Petersburg in some wind-instruments, proved able to play with finesse; of the qualities of the chorus, headed by chorus-master Avranek, I have spoken already. I observed that the performers had treated my opera lovingly; the absence of cuts proved it. I heard my opera in its entirety for the first time, and, faith, how much it gained thereby!

I had met Ippolit Karlovich Altani during one of my visits to Moscow to conduct at Shostakovski's concerts. This acquaintanceship was of the most transient, and since then I had not seen him. On renewing acquaintance, during the production of *Snyegoorochka,* he left me the impression that he was an experienced technician-conductor, but not an artist of the first rank; I was the more pleasantly surprised and gained the conviction that, given the usual technique of an operatic conductor plus a love for the work performed, it is possible to accomplish a great deal; that is, to put on an opera in the way the composer wants it. It was said that Altani had held some incredibly large number of rehearsals for *Snyegoorochka;* Napravnik, on the other hand, contrives it all with a smaller expenditure of the labour of others and himself. But the result is what counts. In Moscow, *Snyegoorochka* went off finely, with less choice orchestral forces and with a conductor who does not enjoy any especial musical authority in anybody's eyes. On the other hand, in St. Petersburg, with an experienced and excellent orchestra, with a conductor who possessed the highest authority both with the public and with musicians, it had been played in a cold, dead manner, at tempi scurrying officially fast, and with most disgusting cuts. I actually conceived a hatred for St. Petersburg and its "great artisan," as V. V. Stasoff nicknames Napravnik. His inestimable virtue is his ear, sensitive to the point of morbidity; his knack of pouncing on mistakes and correcting them on the spot, at "weeding-out" rehearsals, is truly astounding. "Second French horn—C-sharp!" "First bassoon, what have you, E-flat or E?"—"One must not play piano when mezzo-forte is indicated!" etc., keep flying about at his weeding-out rehearsals. A firm character, preciseness, a beautiful beat and clear-cut syncopes are also among his attributes. But what further? Then—often impossibly rapid tempi, metronomic evenness, total lack of softness and roundness in the change of tempi, and, in the last analysis, lack of artistic interpretation. But I have strayed from the Moscow affairs.

The dress-rehearsal went finely, except the scenic part, and the performance had been set for the following day (January 26th). My wife surprised me by coming to Moscow on the day of the performance. I had a first tier box on the right; it accommodated my wife, S. N. Krooglikoff, myself and N. M. Shtroop, who had

come on from St. Petersburg especially for the performance of *Snyegoorochka.* The performance began at 7:30 sharp and ended at 12:45. This was owing to the unusually long intermissions. The success of the opera was considerable. The songs of Lyel', Snyegoorochka's arietta, the duet of Koopava and the Tsar, the hymn of the Byeryendyeys, the song about the beaver and the dance of the *skomorokhs* (merry-andrews) were encored. I was presented with several wreaths: from the professors of the Conservatory, from the Moscow Philharmonic Society, from the orchestra, etc. Mme. Eichenwald (Snyegoorochka) also received a wreath. Eichenwald (whose mother played the harp in the orchestra) was very fine and graceful. Her polished silvery soprano-voice fitted the part of Snyegoorochka to perfection. Sionitskaya (Koopava) played and sang magnificently. Zvyagina (Lyel') was off pitch somewhat, but on the whole sang rather well; good also was Klemyentyeff (Bobyl') who danced the *tryepak* splendidly. Bartsal was a good Byeryendyey, in spite of a voice long past its prime. Krootikova (Spring) was correct, but Korsoff (Mizgir') fell somewhat short of his part. Taken as a whole, the performance was good, and showed united efforts. The artists, Altani, Avranek and I were called to the footlights over and over again. After the opera was over, I went with my wife, and N. M. Shtroop to the *Moscow Hotel* where we had taken rooms and there drank tea in a modest way. The following day we left for St. Petersburg, by the fast train. Before we departed, the artists of the opera gave a luncheon for us, with the toasts and good wishes usual on such occasions. Stage-manager-in-chief Bartsal and Altani saw us off to the depot.

This time, in Moscow, I also had an opportunity to hear my *May Night* given by Pryanishnikoff's private opera company in Shelapootin's Theatre. The performance was very diligent and even exaggeratedly so. The funny pranks were stressed, the *hopak* was danced in some incredible fashion. The small orchestra played rather accurately under Pribik's leadership, but, for some unknown reason, without any piano; this was of considerable injury to the orchestration of Act III, and even produced occasionally a very undesirable emptiness. The tiny chorus sang quite correctly, yet the scene of the nymphs was a total failure. *May Night* was being given, I believe, for the fourteenth time (it had not been pro-

duced previous to this season), the house was full and the opera enjoyed success. On learning that I was present, the audience began to call for me; the artists gathered on the stage and applauded me with the curtain up. Pryanishnikoff told me that *May Night* kept up his receipts tremendously and that only about that time Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacci* began to supplant it in this respect. That opera, as well as Cui's *The Mandarin's Son* I also heard in Pryanishnikoff's performances. I did not like Leoncavallo's opera. A cleverly handled subject of the realistically dramatic style and genuine swindler's music, created by that contemporary musical career-chaser, precisely similar to Mascagni, the author of *Cavalleria Rusticana,*—caused a furore. These gentlemen are as remote from old man Verdi as they are from a star in the heavens. *The Mandarin's Son* appeared to me a talented composition with music unsuited for the subject which in itself needs no music at all and is so poor that it is nauseating to hear and see it.

During my stay in Moscow I also had an opportunity to attend a concert of the Russian Musical Society under V. I. Safonoff with d'Albert as assisting artist. Excerpts from Saint-Saëns's *Le Déluge,* the overture to Gluck's *Iphigenia* and Liszt's E flat major concerto were performed. Safonoff led the orchestra excellently. I also had a chance to be present at a rehearsal of the Conservatory pupils' concert. Beethoven's Mass in C-major was sung; here, too, Safonoff seemed to me a musician who knew his business. Until then I had formed no impression of him as a conductor.

I left Moscow generally pleased and rested; yes, even filled with a desire to remove to Moscow where life seemed to me somehow more youthful and fresher than in St. Petersburg, where everybody is weary of everything, everything is familiar to everybody and nothing can surprise or rejoice anybody! I also had become convinced not only that *Snyegoorochka* was my best opera, but taken all in all—as to its idea and its execution—possibly the best of contemporary operas. It is long, but it has no long-drawn passages and should be given in its entirety or else with most trifling cuts. When I called Altani's attention to the fact that the performance was dragging too much and that, perhaps, some slight cuts would be insisted upon, I was therefore pleased to hear from him that first of all he would endeavour to reduce the

duration of the intermissions, and secondly, that he would try to avoid encores desired by the audience; that only then would he see whether cuts could or could not be dispensed with.

On returning to St. Petersburg, I began again to read little by little, as I felt rested; but the unpleasant sensations in my head had not left me entirely. I was also engaged in reading proof of the new orchestral score of *Pskovityanka* (then in the process of engraving), as well as in reading proof of the orchestral score of *May Night,* engraved by Byelyayeff who had bought this edition from the Bitner firm. This latter had passed from the deceased Rater into the hands of the adventurer Müller.

Of the musical events of this year I shall note the following. After my refusal to conduct them, the Russian Symphony Concerts were placed in the hands of Glazunoff. But he fell ill before the opening concert and A. K. Lyadoff took his place at Byelyayeff's and my own urgent request. He conducted finely the first concert which he had at first done his best to escape. Among other numbers there were given Glazunoff's Third Symphony in D-major (first time) and the Overture to *May Night,* which Lyadoff conducted delightfully, quite unlike Napravnik's fashion in days gone by, at the Mariinski Theatre. I felt well pleased with my "classic" instrumentation of the Overture, with its natural-scale trumpets and French horns. The second Russian Symphony Concert went well, under the direction of Glazunoff who continued making progress in conducting. Though there were some faults in the performance of *Sadko* given at the concerts from the new score, everything else went splendidly. As in the years previous, the chorus of the Russian opera took part also. Among other numbers, there was given the coronation scene from *Boris Godunoff* in my revision. The effect achieved was magnificent; and of this, it would seem, even those of Musorgski's admirers were convinced who had been ready to accuse me of spoiling his works, because of the alleged conservatory learning I had acquired, learning that ran counter to the freedom of creative art: e. g., Musorgski's harmonic incoherence. By the way, in this scene, I was particularly successful with the bell-tolling, which sounded so beautiful under Musorgski's fingers on the piano and failed so utterly in the orchestra. Once again the tolling of bells! How many times and in what different forms had I reproduced in the orchestration

this invariable feature of ancient Russian life, which is still preserved in our own days![1]

The concerts of the Russian Musical Society were under Krooshevski's direction this season. However, for one concert there came from Paris, Lamoureux, who was little to my liking. Among other things, Krooshevski produced Liszt's *Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* and, it was said, rather unsuccessfully, thanks to an utter lack of understanding of Liszt's tempi. Borodin's Second Symphony and my *Shekherazada* were performed by him beautifully. The last named I did not hear myself, however, as I had to stay at home owing to my son Andrey's dangerous illness. I also did not hear Balakireff's *Tamara* in his interpretation; very poor—it was said. Krooshevski, a former Conservatory pupil of mine, is a fine musician, a dexterous pianist who accompanies from piano-scores the most difficult passages at sight and in proper tempo, without omitting a single note for glibness. His fine ear, splendid beat, organizing ability and sang-froid make him a living replica of Napravnik. He is no artist at all, and once he has gained a footing at the opera as accompanist and coach of solo singers, he does not bother about anything apart from his official duties. Napravnik is a composer himself; he has his likes and dislikes in music; to Krooshevski, however, music means a series of sounds forming melodies and chords in various measures and tempi, with various shades of force, etc.,—a trade for which one is paid, but not a poetic art. It seems to me he is a born *assistant* conductor, and not a conductor, exactly as there are associate ministers, who are very useful but can never become ministers, or deacons who are never promoted to be priests, etc. Napravnik is very fond of him, and already he is known as second conductor of the opera; in time to come he will be principal conductor. But he is under no circumstances the conductor for a prominent concert organization like the Russian Musical Society. He has no tendencies, no ideals. Apparently, he has never attended any other concerts than those at which he has accompanied, either because concerts have not interested him, or because he has been busy

[1] The Russian composers are fond of reproducing the effect of bells in their music. Other examples may be found in the orchestral prelude to *Khovanshchina,* the prelude to the coronation scene in *Boris,* in *Pskovityanka,* and in Chaykovski's overture, *1812.* The effect is also to be noted in Rakhmaninoff's choral setting of Poe's *The Bells* and in Stravinski's song, *The Cloister.* C. V. V.

giving lessons. He is not conversant with either Russian or foreign music-literature, and hence does not know the traditions. I imagine that if he had done well with Borodin's Symphony and *Shekherazada,* it was because, this time, he submitted to the orchestra who knew these works. But *Tamara* the orchestra hardly knew, and hence it fared badly at his hands. However, Krooshevski had wanted to see me about the tempi of *Tamara,* and that was conscientious on his part; but, owing to the composer being within reach, I advised him to apply to the author. When I mentioned it to Balakireff, he said to me with his characteristic misanthropy: "Oh, please deliver me from that! Show him the tempi yourself, if you wish." Nevertheless Krooshevski whom I had already given the address reached Balakireff. What their talk was like I don't know. Krooshevski reported that Balakireff had shown him whatever was necessary. Of course, Balakireff did not come to rehearsal.

In addition to the production of *Mlada, Yolanta, Shchelkoonchik* (Nutcracker),[1] and *Cavalleria Rusticana,* there was also revived *Ruslan and Lyudmila* for the fiftieth anniversary since its production. Especially for this Myel'nikoff sang, who had then not a shred of voice left. Lyudmila Ivanovna Shestakova sat in a first-tier box and was presented with a wreath (of course, V. V. Stasoff's hand was back of it). My wife and I were among those in the procession presenting the wreath. To mark this solemnity —the Head's narrative and the Finale of the Third Act were restored in their entirety. Napravnik's tempi were shocking, as usual. The overture, the entr'actes to Acts II and IV were played with the speed of an electric current, if not with the speed of light. The famous finale of the Oriental dances was not restored after all, and the usual ugly coda was performed. With *Mlada's* happy omen the Opera House now possessed a double-bassoon; still Napravnik had not thought of introducing it into *Ruslan,* even for this festive occasion, and yet it is named in *Ruslan and Lyudmila,* according to Glinka's orchestral score.

[1] Chaykovski's ballet given with *Yolanta,* 1892. J. A. J.

CHAPTER XXIII

1893–95

Quartet prize competition. Decision to leave the Chapel. Summer at Yalta. Chaykovski's death and the Sixth Symphony. Trip to Odessa. My return to composing. Beginning of *Christmas Eve*. Summer. Vyechasha. Continuation of *Christmas Eve* and beginning of *Sadko*. Death of Rubinstein. Trip to Kiyeff. *Pskovityanka* at the Society of Musical Gatherings. Censorship difficulties with *Christmas Eve*. Composing the opera *Sadko*. Byel'ski.

The examination of the quartets sent in for the prize-competition of the St. Petersburg Quartet Society took place in March. This time, the competition was open to none but Russian subjects, and the money was given by M. P. Byelyayeff. With Chaykovski and Laroche I was of the committee of judges. Few quartets were submitted. We awarded two prizes of third rank. One went to my former pupil Alyeksey Avgustovich Davidoff (a brother of Ivan A. Davidoff, also a pupil of mine, whom I have mentioned before), the other went to Evald, the cellist of Byelyayeff's Quartet. Thus two more were added to the rather long list of names of composers of Byelyayeff's circle. Both quartets were written in a well-ordered manner, but nothing beyond that. During the season described, I seldom attended Byelyayeff's evenings, as they had deteriorated considerably in musical interest. Well-known works of Russian composers were played invariably. Among the slighter novelties, two pretty pieces for the cello, Sokoloff's *Elegy* and *Barcarole,* stood out in a refreshing manner. My son Andrey, who had by that time shown some signs of progress in cello playing, was studying them under P. A. Ronginski. Occasionally, V. V. Stasoff put in an appearance at Byelyayeff's evenings, as in former days, and demanded that one of Beethoven's last quartets be played. The evenings were also attended by Vyerzhbilovich and Hildebrand, who occasionally took a hand in the music.

Once Lyadoff delivered himself of a small composition for quartet. But somehow the society at the Byelyayeff evenings did not pull together: all in all, too many new elements began to intrude in it, and a sort of tedium and routine made themselves felt.

In February the ten-year period of my service at the Court Chapel was to terminate; I was entitled to a pension under the regulations of the Ministry of the Court, as more than thirty years of my services had accumulated in all; I got it into my head to carry out the idea that had long pursued me—to retire. The relations between Balakireff and myself had become so strained, affairs at the Chapel were managed so stupidly, the entire personnel at the Chapel—save the music instructors—was so distasteful to me, the whole atmosphere of the Chapel was so permeated with gossip and partiality, that it was quite natural on my part to be eager to get out; to all of this was added my fatigue at the time. I had a private talk with Balakireff about resigning "because of illness." But owing to the fact that just at that time he was ridding the Chapel of the inspector of classes in general subjects, Nazimoff, with whom he was dissatisfied, Balakireff suggested to me to delay my resignation until autumn. My leaving he treated in a very fine and conscientious spirit, promising to do his very best in regard to arranging the pension. Complying with his wishes I decided to wait until autumn; but obtained from him a leave of absence for the summer. Yet the following circumstances soon made me forego temporarily the thought of resigning.

Masha's sickness still persisted and dragged, depressing our spirits throughout the winter of 1892–93. This state of affairs had been going on for two and a half years. In the spring, my wife left for Yalta with Masha and Nadya, at the advice of physicians. They planned to live there all of the spring, summer and autumn, owing to the beneficial effect on Masha of the local climate. But what was to be done the coming winter? It was quite likely that my wife might have to stay in the Crimea for the winter as well, or go abroad. Under these circumstances, retirement from service began to look to me inopportune, owing to the decrease of income it would entail. I made up my mind to defer my resignation until February, 1895, the more so as this retirement had been put off until the fall to meet Balakireff's wishes. In February, 1895, I was to round out thirty-five years of service,

N. A. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF *from the painting by* V. A. SYEROFF

and would get an increase in pension. I had another talk with Balakireff and obtained his consent to my waiting till the time mentioned.

Having banished Nazimoff from the Chapel, Balakireff managed to have B—off appointed in his place. Once he had got a foothold in the Chapel as steward, this favourite of Balakireff's was becoming his right hand. In all likelihood, he had been the one who had ousted Nazimoff. Whence he came and what his virtues were, that had so endeared him to Balakireff—is a mystery. Thanks to the fact that B—off had been confirmed as inspector of the Chapel classes in general subjects, Balakireff ventured to give me (privately) leave of absence for all of three months, as, in the event of his usual departure in August, he would be able to hand over the management of the Chapel to B—off and not to me as on former occasions.

Before leaving for Yalta to join my wife and daughters I had a talk with Krasnokootski about my desire to resume, in the fall, the orchestra class of the Chapel, that I had handed on to him for one year only. Krasnokootski had no objections. But, on learning of my intention, Balakireff wrote me a letter in which he persuaded me, nay almost insisted, that I do not take upon myself the orchestra class. The reason he gave was my irritability, which he asserted had developed owing to illness and might recur, despite my coming summer's rest, if I began to teach the orchestra class. Such solicitude, on Balakireff's part, concerning my health and tranquillity, clearly showed me that he was highly pleased with the fact that I had not led the orchestra class for a year and that there could have been no disputes or discontent between us in the matter. In brief, he was evidently pleased to get rid of me; hence I thought his wish equivalent to a command, and abandoned for good and all the thought of taking back into my hands my own creation—the orchestra class of the Chapel.

After the examinations at the Conservatory and at the Chapel had been ended, I left, on May 13, for Yalta whence disquieting news had been reaching me of Masha's condition. For two or three weeks before leaving I paid several visits a week to the studio (near the Kalinkin Bridge) of I. Y. Ryepin, who was painting my portrait on an order from Byelyayeff. Prior to my departure, on my saint's day, in the evening, Chaykovski, Byelyayeff,

Glazunoff, Lyadoff, Yastryebtseff, Sokoloff and Trifonoff came to my house. We sat and talked. Among other things Chaykovski and I discussed the meeting which had taken place a few days before, that of the Board of Directors of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Musical Society; to this meeting there had been invited also Auer, Solovyoff, Laroche and myself, although we were not on the Board. The discussion had centred on electing a conductor for the concerts of the Russian Musical Society for the ensuing season; I had mentioned Chaykovski. My suggestion had been accepted, and the Board had already approached Chaykovski with the request, but he was still undecided. A. S. Tañeyeff, one of the members of the Board, happened to be on the train by which I travelled. He told me that Chaykovski had consented to take charge of four or five concerts, while for the others, various other conductors would be invited and, among these, Lyadoff (for two concerts), a fact which I was exceedingly glad to hear.

On reaching Yalta I found my poor little girl feeling worse than when she had left St. Petersburg. The latter half of May and June went monotonously with us. I read much, was busy writing the piano score of *Pskovityanka,* began taking sea-baths, but walked little. We did not know how long we would stay at Weber's villa (near Yalta), where we had put up, and so I did not venture to rent a piano. Toward the end of June, I did rent one after all, but improvised ever so little; I jotted down a small piece for the cello and recorded some few other things. But Masha's health taking a turn for the worse, we decided to take her back to St. Petersburg and I gave up the piano. However, our departure was postponed as at first Masha was too weak to travel, then she felt a little better and, on her physician's advice, we resolved to wait. For nearly a year I had not played the piano, and whenever I did come near it, it was to accompany the playing of my children: Volodya—on the violin and Andrey—on the cello. When engrossed in reading I felt in no musical mood. Here at Yalta this mood came over me for two or three days in succession. Masha's illness and our apprehension for her produced a depressing effect on my wife and me. Delightful Yalta, with its wonderful views, flora and blue sea grew downright unbearable to us this time. At the beginning of my sojourn in Yalta I had made some progress on the instrumentation of *Pskovityanka* and had

even turned to writing a text-book of musical forms and a text-book of the theory of harmony; but instead of simple and sensible text-books, some sort of philosophic dreams came into being. I attempted to go on with my interrupted work on the æsthetics of musical art, work to which I had returned several times in St. Petersburg during the spring, but even in Yalta I was dissatisfied with my sketches. [1] I gave up this work and turned to writing my reminiscences. [2]

By August Masha's condition grew worse. Some time after the twentieth of that month I was to return to St. Petersburg, as my leave of absence was then to end. We wrote to Misha and Sonya that they were to come on to Yalta that my wife might not remain alone in attendance on the sick little girl. Soon after Misha and Sonya arrived, I left for St. Petersburg alone, but en route, in Kharkoff, a telegram from Yalta overtook me, announcing the death of Masha on August 22. I returned to Yalta immediately. We buried our poor little girl at the Yalta cemetery and started for St. Petersburg all together.

In view of my expected retirement from the Chapel, we immediately began to look for an apartment, all the more so as the apartment at the Chapel brought back sad memories of Masha's illness and of the death of Slavchik. My wife conceived a positive horror of this apartment. By September 20 new rooms (on Zagorodny Prospekt, 28) were found, and we moved into them.[3]

While serving my last months in the Court Chapel, I took a somewhat languid attitude toward my duties; yet I attended very regularly. My own work oscillated between compiling text-books of counterpoint and instrumentation and writing æsthetic philosophical articles. Mid-season I threw up these fruitless and absurdly misdirected beginnings (I destroyed them completely later on), and my thoughts took a different turn. I once more expressed a desire to take up the directing of the Russian Symphony Concerts, and Byelyayeff received this suggestion with joy.

During this autumn Chaykovski died, after having conducted his own Sixth Symphony only a few days before his death. I recall having asked him, during the intermission, after the perform-

[1] All these sketches I burned (January 21, 1904), as being good for nothing.
[2] Yalta, July 13, 1893.
[3] St. Petersburg, January 22, 1904.

ance of the Symphony,—whether he had a program for this composition. He replied that there was one, of course, but that he did not wish to announce it. During that last visit of his to St. Petersburg I saw him only at the concert. A few days later the news of his grave illness was in everybody's mouth. The whole world filed to his apartment several times a day to inquire about his health. His sudden taking off was a blow to one and all. Soon after the funeral, the Sixth Symphony was repeated at a concert with Napravnik as conductor. This time the public greeted it rapturously, and since that moment the fame of the Symphony kept growing and growing, spreading gradually over Russia and Europe. It was said that the Symphony had been made understandable to the public of St. Petersburg by Napravnik's interpretation, something that Chaykovski, who was not a gifted conductor, had been unable to accomplish. Hence, they said, at the first performance under its author's direction the public had greeted it with considerable restraint. I think this is not true. The Symphony was played finely by Napravnik, but it had gone very well at the author's hands, too. The public had simply not fathomed it the first time, and had not paid enough attention to it; precisely as several years earlier it had failed to give due attention to Chaykovski's Fifth Symphony. I imagine that the composer's sudden death (which had given rise to all sorts of rumours) as well as stories of his presentiment of approaching death (to which mankind is so prone) and, further, the propensity toward discovering a connection between the gloomy mood of the Symphony's last movement and such a presentiment,—all these now focussed the public's attention and sympathies on this work, and the splendid composition soon became famed and even modish.

Upon the organization behind the Russian Symphony Concerts devolved the moral obligation of devoting its first concert to the memory of Chaykovski. As far as I recollect, that, to a considerable degree, was precisely what had induced me to undertake the concerts once more. The concert of Chaykovski's compositions was given November 30, under my direction, with the assistance of F. M. Blumenfeld (the Fourth Symphony, *Francesca da Rimini, Marche slave,* pianoforte pieces, etc.).

The conducting of the Russian Symphony Concerts (that season

there were three in all; at the final concert, my *Verse about Alyeksey, the Godly Man* had its first performance) and the invitation D. D. Klimoff had sent me, to come to Odessa to condct two concerts, gradually diverted me from my fruitless work on the textbook of æsthetics. On the other hand, I made a final decision to retire from the Chapel, as the pension I was entitled to appeared sufficient, while service in the Chapel had grown unbearable, and the relations between Balakireff and myself were manifestly impaired for all time. In January, 1894, I sent in my resignation and went off to Odessa. I had been asked to conduct, in the Municipal Theatre, one concert in memory of Chaykovski and one with a program of my own compositions. In Odessa they paid me no end of attention and granted me many rehearsals. I practised the program numbers with the strings alone, and the brass-instruments alone in various pieces, drilling a fair but provincial orchestra as if they were pupils;—and I got out an excellent performance. The assisting artists in the concerts were the singer Mme. Zherebtsova and the pianiste Dronseyko (a pupil of Klimoff). The program in memory of Chaykovski (February 5) was as follows: Third Symphony in D-major; aria from *Orlyeanskaya Dyeva* (The Maid of Orleans); the First Concerto for the piano; songs, and the overture, *Romeo and Juliet.* The concert suffered somewhat through Dronseyko, who played in ragged rhythm in the second movement and thereby kept both orchestra and me at a loss. The program of the other concert (February 12) included the First Symphony in E-minor; the song of Lyel'; *Sadko;* songs and the *Spanish Capriccio.* The success of both concerts was quite considerable. I was induced to conduct one more concert (for the benefit of the orchestra); the *Capriccio* was repeated, and also the suite from *Shchelkoonchik* (Nutcracker). My wife came on to attend these concerts. We had to spend our time in social calls and at the musical soirées of the Odessa Music School. The governor of the city of Odessa at the time was P. A. Zyelyony, my quondam chief, once commander of the clipper *Almaz.* A meeting with him would have afforded me no pleasure; but, as luck would have it, he was out of town just then. However, we had many occasions to meet his wife; once she even invited us to dine with her; but we slipped out of that. In Odessa we made the ac-

quaintance of the painter N. D. Kooznyetsoff and his wife (she is a genuine Ookrainian).

Walks along the sea gave me my first thoughts of taking up, some day, a Homeric theme such as the episode of Nausicaä; however, the intention was only a passing one.

On my return to St. Petersburg I felt refreshed by the trip. To our joy, my resignation had been accepted. I had been granted a satisfactory pension.

To this period belongs the printing of the new orchestral score of *The Maid of Pskov,* undertaken by Bessel. I was deluged with proof reading. The concerts, the trip to Odessa, my retirement from the Chapel, my work on *Pskovityanka,* all these together distracted attention from those barren, dry and nerve-racking occupations as well as from my thought-wanderings in philosophical and æsthetic jungles. The desire seized me to write an opera. With the death of Chaykovski, the subject of *Christmas Eve,* so attractive also to me, had been released, as it were. Despite many of its musical pages, I had always considered Chaykovski's opera weak, and Polonski's libretto good for nothing. During Chaykovski's lifetime I should have been unable to take up this subject without causing the man himself a heartache. Now I was free in that respect, too, in addition to having always been entitled to it morally.

Toward the spring of 1894 I finally made up my mind to compose *Christmas Eve* and began to write the libretto myself, closely following Gogol. But my predilection for Slavic "goddom" and devildom and sun-myths, had not left me since the days of *May Night* and especially *Snyegoorochka;* it had not run its course in me even with the writing of *Mlada.* I clung to fragmentary motives occurring in Gogol's works like *Christmas caroling, the stars playing at blind man's buff,* the flight of *oven-forks* and *hearth-broom,* the encounter with a *witch,* etc. Having read and re-read in Afanasyeff (*The Slavs' Poetic Views of Nature*) about the connection between the Christian celebration of Christmas and the birth of the sun after the winter solstice, with vague myths of Ovsyeñ, Kolyada,[1]

[1] Ovsyeñ or Avsyeñ, originally the first day of spring, March 1 (March was then the first month of the year) now transferred to New Year or New Year's eve. Kolyada (from Lat. *calendae,* the first of a month), the caroling and glorification done by youngsters under the windows of people in order to get a few pennies during the Christmas week and New Year, until Epiphany. J. A. J.

etc., I conceived the idea of introducing these extinct beliefs into the Ookrainian life described by Gogol in his story. In this way, my libretto, while clinging on the one hand faithfully to Gogol, (not even barring his language and expressions) contained, on the other hand, in its fantastic portions, much extraneous matter dragged in by me. To me and those who desired to delve into it and understand me, this connection was clear; but to audiences, subsequently, it proved utterly incomprehensible and even disturbing. My enthusiasm for myths, and my combining them with Gogol's story,—was of course a mistake on my part; but a mistake which offered the opportunity of writing a wealth of interesting music.

Soon, a respectable amount of musical material had accumulated, and the first tableau had been written in rough draft. I remember that shortly before our going to the country, Shtroop, Trifonoff, Yastryebtseff and some other people gathered at our house. Without telling them precisely what I was composing, I played them the introduction to the opera and asked them to guess what it was about. To be sure, it was hard to guess, but most conjectures revolved about what was approximately correct; therefore, I told them of my work and set forth the plan of the opera.

Christmas Eve was the beginning of my uninterrupted operatic activity that followed.

In May we removed for the summer to the estate of Vyechasha, in the Looga canton (Plyoossa Station). Vyechasha is a charming spot: a wonderful large lake Pyesno and a vast ancient orchard with century-old lindens, elms, etc. The house was a heavy and clumsy structure, yet spacious and comfortable. The proprietress—an old woman—with her daughter, an over-ripe maiden, lived close-by, in a tiny house, but did not interfere with us. The bathing was fine. At night, the moon and the stars cast wonderful reflections on the lake. There was a multitude of birds. I had stumbled upon this estate, and it took my fancy at once. Nearby were the villages Zapyesenye and Polosy; not far away was the Lubensk manor owned by Mme. Bookharova. The woods were somewhat far, but fine. We were all in love with Vyechasha.

The second tableau of my opera had been begun by me when I was still in St. Petersburg; here the composition advanced rapidly. I composed almost without a break, devoting but a little time to

bathing and walking; by the end of the summer the entire opera, except the last tableau, had been written in rough draft, while Act I had even been orchestrated to a considerable extent. The thought of introducing Tableau VIII (the last but one) with Vakoola's return flight and the procession of Ovsyeñ and Kolyada, came to me during the summer and was carried out forthwith.

At the end of the summer, Trifonoff, Yastryebtseff and Byelyayeff each spent two or three days with me, and I played them passages from the opera I was writing.

Shortly before my coming to Vyechasha, I had received a letter from N. K. Findeisen [1] in which he urged me to set to work on an opera on the subject of *Sadko* and proposed a certain plan for the libretto. As an operatic subject, *Sadko* had interested me from time to time, as early as the Eighties. Findeisen's idea brought it to my mind once more. In the very midst of other work, that is while composing *Christmas Eve,* my thought frequently turned also to *Sadko.* My project differed somewhat from Findeisen's. I wrote Stasoff of my idea; in reply, he, too, suggested several things; thus he gave me the idea of the first scene of the opera, which I had not had in view originally. During the summer, the plan of the "opera *bylina*" (epic song, legend) *Sadko,* as I recall it, took final shape in my mind, though subsequently there crept into it certain important additions, of which I shall speak in due course. I had in view to utilize for this opera the material of my symphonic poem, and, in any event, to make use of its motives as leading motives for the opera. To be sure, the writing of *Christmas Eve* held first place with me; yet even at that very time there came into my head some new musical ideas for *Sadko* also, like the melody of *Sadko's* aria, the theme of Nyezhata's *bylina;* something for the finale of the opera. I remember that often the place where I composed such material was on the long plank footbridges running from the shore to the bathing pavilion on the lake. The bridges ran down among bulrushes; on one side were visible the tall bending willows of the garden, on the other side lay the wide expanse of Lake Pyesno. The whole environment, somehow, disposed me to thoughts of *Sadko.* Yet the true, real writing of

[1] Born in 1868. Editor of the *Russian Musical Gazette,* the first serious musical magazine in Russia (monthly 1894–99; weekly thereafter). J. A. J.

Sadko had not commenced, and was postponed until the completion of *Christmas Eve.*

On my return from Vyechasha to St. Petersburg I soon finished writing the entire rough draft of *Christmas Eve* and set out to orchestrate the opera as well as to put the finishing touches to it. Byelyayeff agreed to publish my opera; and, as the orchestral score grew ready under my hands, it was sent on piece-meal for engraving by Röder in Leipsic. I can't recall the exact month when I had the entire orchestral score finished and had made the arrangement (of the piano score); I believe it was toward the end of the winter of 1894–95. All in all, it took a little less than a year to do the entire composition with its instrumentation.

On September 28, my *May Night* was revived at the Mikhaylovski Theatre with Chooprynnikoff as Lyevko and Slavina in the rôle of Hanna. The performance of the opera was not bad. Napravnik conducted, and apparently with a will. It was given several times at the Mikhaylovski Theatre, with middling success.

In the fall, A. G. Rubinstein died. The funeral surroundings were solemn. The coffin was set in the Izmaylovski Cathedral; musicians kept vigil at the coffin day and night. Lyadoff and I were on duty between two and three in the morning. I recall how amid the church obscurity there entered the sable mourning figure of Malozyomova,[1] who came to kneel before the ashes of her Rubinstein whom she had worshipped. There was even something of the fantastic about it.

The Russian Symphony Concerts of this season (they were four in number) were under my direction. The first concert was devoted to the memory of Rubinstein. The program consisted of: Third Symphony in A-major; aria from *Moses; Don Quixote;* the Fourth Piano Concerto in D-minor (Lavroff); songs; and dances from the ballet *Vinogradnaya Loza* (The Grapewine). At the succeeding Russian Symphony Concerts the following numbers were

[1] Of this lady Mrs. Newmarch writes as follows: "Mme. Malozyomova, whom I met in St. Petersburg, was for many years *dame de compagnie,* or chaperon, at Rubinstein's classes at the Conservatoire. She was a devoted friend of the master's, and few people knew more of his fascinating personality or spoke more eloquently of his teaching." According to Riemann, Sofiya Alyeksandrovna Malozyomova was a little more than a *dame de compagnie.* Born in 1845 in St. Petersburg, she was educated at the Smol'ny Institute; in 1863 she entered the St. Petersburg Conservatory, from which she was graduated in 1866. She was a pupil of Leschetizky and Rubinstein. Later she devoted her life to piano instruction at the Conservatory. C. V. V.

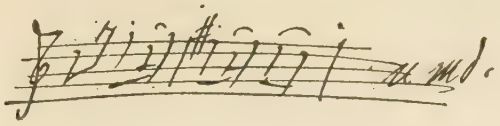
"first times": Glazunoff, *Ballet Suite* and *Fantasy*;[1] also (at the Fourth Concert, with the assistance of Mravina): Introduction; Oksana's aria; *Kolyadka* and *Polonaise* from *Christmas Eve*. Everything sounded excellent.

Among the events of my musical life of this season belongs the delightful performance of *Snyegoorochka*, at my house, by artists of the Imperial Theatres. Mravina, Dolina, Kamyenskaya, Runge; Yakovleff, Vasilyeff III, Chooprynnikoff and Koryakin kindly consented to sing the opera to the accompaniment of a piano. Fyeliks Blumenfeld played the accompaniments; Vyerzhbilovich played the cello solo in Byeryendyey's Cavatina. We even had a miniature female chorus of opera-choristers who gave their services gratis. The guests were numerous; everything was charming.

In January, I made a trip to Kiyeff, at the invitation of the Directors of the local opera, to witness the production of *Snyegoorochka* there. I attended the dress-rehearsal and the first two performances. The part of Byeryendyey was sung by Morskoy (then still a private opera artist), Snyegoorochka, by Karatayeva, Lyel', by Koryetskaya, Vyesna (Spring), by Azyerskaya, etc. The conductor, Pagani, was baffled by the 11/4 time of the final chorus, after all. In general, the coming of a composer directly to the dress-rehearsal has little sense: it is too late then to make corrections or changes, while to insist upon postponement of the performance is both inconvenient and unpleasant. On the whole, all went off in a fair, though provincial way; the orchestra was sufficiently spirited during the entire Butter-week chorus. There was dancing till their feet refused to bear them; especially did Dooma, the stage-manager, exert himself above all others. As prescribed by provincial taste, Bobyl' cut capers, while at the performance proper, during Byeryendyey's Cavatina, he played the mountebank, clambered on the throne behind the tsar's back, thereby drawing loud bursts of laughter from the audience. Morskoy, who had no suspicion of this, felt embarrassed and apprehensive lest this laughter of the onlookers was the result of some disorder in his own costume. At the dress-rehearsal a very funny thing happened: I was standing on the stage; while the chorus

[1] Op. 52 and Op. 53. J. A. J.

at the beginning of Act III was being sung, I noticed that the motive



which was played by the first violins, was at the same time being played three octaves below that, by one of the double-basses. Pagani, who was not particularly keen of ear in harmony, did not perceive it and kept on conducting. I went over to the double-bass player and satisfied myself that he was really reading the motive from his music. I stopped the orchestra and asked the double-bass player to show me his part. It turned out that, instead of the violin cue, the copyist had actually foisted this motive upon him and in the bass clef at that. I forbade the musician to play this motive and struck the motive from his part. Then the double-bass player, who evidently seemed to have taken a fancy to that motive, said to me in an imploring voice: "Mr. Rimsky-Korsakoff! Please let this motive stay and permit me to play it! It sounds so well this way." Of course, I could not allow it, and thereby brought sorrow upon the unfortunate player. After the second performance, my wife and I returned to St. Petersburg. In Kiyeff they quite took to my opera where it later had a long run.

In Kiyeff I had a chance to meet my former pupils—Ryb and the composer Lysenko.[1] At the latter's house I ate *vareyniki*[2] and listened to excerpts from his opera *Taras Bool'ba*.[3] Did not like it. . . . I mean *Taras Bool'ba,* not the *varyeniki.*

The Society of Musical Gatherings which had sprung up several years before this in St. Petersburg and had shown few signs of life heretofore, suddenly came to life this season, under the chairmanship of my former pupil Ivan Avgustovich Davidoff. They planned to produce my *Pskovityanka* at the Panayevski Theatre, under Davidoff's direction, after its new score as recently pub-

[1] Lysenko also wrote an opera on the subject of Gogol's *Christmas Eve.* Solovyoff and Shchoorovski were others who set this theme. C. V. V.

[2] Dumplings filled with curds, or berries, or cabbage, etc. This national dish of the Ookrainians is considered a great delicacy. J. A. J.

[3] Based on Gogol's famous story by that name. J. A. J.

lished by Bessel. Choral and orchestral rehearsals were begun, and, as author, I was called in for guidance. My Sonya sang in the chorus. Owing to Davidoff's illness, the orchestral rehearsals for weeding out errors fell to my lot; later the recuperated Davidoff came into his own. *The Maid of Pskov* was given on Thursday, April 6th, and had three more performances. Ivan Grozny was sung by Koryakin, Toocha by Vasilyeff III, Vlasyevna by Mme. Dore, Tokmakoff by Loonacharski, Olga by Mme. Vyelinskaya (no longer of the Mariinski Theatre at that time). At the second performance, Sokolovskaya sang Olga; at the third performance, the part was to be sung again by Vyelinskaya, but owing to some caprice she refused to do so and the part was sung by L. D. Ilyina (a mezzo-soprano) who transposed her aria in Act II a third lower. At the first performance a scandalous scene occurred. The orchestra came to a stop, and it was necessary to begin afresh from section number so and so. In general, however, the opera was given fairly well, considering its amateur chorus, its amateur conductor and its amateur rehearsing.

During the season of 1894–95 the instrumentation and printing of *Christmas Eve* was making forced headway, and I apprized Director of the Theatres Vsyevolozhski of the existence of my new opera. He demanded that I submit the libretto to the dramatic censor, at the same time expressing serious doubt about its being approved by the censor, owing to the presence of the Empress Catherine II (The Great) among the dramatis personæ. As I was somewhat familiar with censorship requirements, I had not introduced that name into the opera from the very outset, having called the character merely *tsaritsa,* and invariably calling St. Petersburg merely *grad-stolitsa* (capital city). It would seem that the censor might be satisfied: how many are the varieties of *tsaritsas* that appear in operas? On the whole, *Christmas Eve* is a fairy-tale, and the *tsaritsa* merely a fairy-tale personage. I submitted the libretto in this form to the dramatic censor, being positive it would be approved and fearing for my scrivener rather than for my queen. But nothing of that sort! At the censorship bureau I was flatly refused permission to put on Tableau VII of the opera (scene before the Queen's palace), as, under an Imperial Order of 1837 to the censorship bureau, under no circumstances might Russian monarchs be introduced in operas. I argued that

there was no personage of the Romanoff house in my opera, that only some fantastic queen appears in it, that the theme of *Christmas Eve* deals with a mere fairy-tale, an invention of Gogol's, in which I have a right to change any one of the dramatis personæ, that even the word "St. Petersburg" is mentioned nowhere, that consequently all allusions to actual history have been steered clear of, etc. At the censor's I was told that Gogol's story was familiar to everybody and that nobody could have any doubts about my queen being none other than Empress Catherine and that the censorship bureau had no right to sanction the opera! I made up my mind, if possible, to petition in the higher spheres for permission to produce the opera. In this I was aided by the following circumstances.

In the autumn of 1894, Balakireff left the Court Chapel; a new Director had to be appointed. One fine day, the Minister of the Imperial Court, Count Vorontsoff-Dashkoff, summoned me and suggested that I assume Balakireff's functions in his stead. My free position, outside all government service, seemed so attractive to me at the time that I did not feel the slightest inclination to join the Chapel again, even in the independent position of Director. I declined Count Vorontsoff's offer, assuring him that the cause of my refusal lay solely in my desire for rest and for the free time which I so needed for composition. The Count was exceedingly amiable with me and talked of many things concerning the Chapel. Seeing that he was in good spirits and amiable mood, I took it into my head to pray his intercession with the Emperor to permit the use of the *Christmas Eve* libretto on the stage. Vorontsoff heard all my arguments and promised to do everything in his power. I drew up a petition concerning the matter and submitted it to him. During the Christmas holidays a courier came to me and brought from the director of the administrative section of the Ministry of the Court an announcement to this effect: "In accordance with the most devoted report on the petition submitted by you to the Minister of the Imperial Court, his Majesty the Emperor's permission has been granted for admitting the opera *Christmas Eve* composed by you to be produced on the Imperial stage without change in the libretto." (December 31, 1894.) [1] I was in a transport of joy and told Vsyevolozhski of the matter.

[1] I have this document in my possession.

Once the libretto had been sanctioned by his Majesty and the censor had received a slap in the face, a certain stir had been created in the higher spheres; the case, consequently, has assumed a different aspect. Vsyevolozhski delightedly seized upon the idea of giving *Christmas Eve* an especially magnificent production with which he might even please the Court. He had a magnificent portrait of Catherine II and he would exert himself to have my queen made up to resemble as closely as possible that Empress, and in the mise-en-scène he would endeavour to reproduce with accuracy the gorgeous surroundings of Catherine's Court. With all that he would manifestly do something pleasing to the Court, and that is the main thing among the duties of a Director of Theatres. I attempted somewhat to cool this ardour on Vsyevolozhski's part and suggested to him not to stress particularly my *tsaritsa's* resemblance to Catherine II, saying that it was not necessary. But Vsyevolozhski would have his own way. Immediately arrangements were made to accept my opera for production the ensuing season in 1895–96. During Lent a beginning was made with drilling the choruses, parts were distributed to the artists, the scene painting was begun and the enterprise was in full swing.

Towards the spring of 1895 much musical material for the opera *Sadko* had matured in my mind; the libretto was almost ready and definitely worked out in part; for this I had scanned and used as a basis many *bylinas,* songs, etc. In the spring I began and finished in sketch the first tableau (the feast at Novgorod), which gave me satisfaction. In May we moved once more to dear Vyechasha for a summer's stay. [1]

This time my summer's sojourn at Vyechasha was exactly like the previous one. The work of composing *Sadko* ran on uninterruptedly. Tableaux, I, II, IV, V, VI and VII were ready one after the other, and, toward the end of summer, the whole opera (according to its original plan) was finished in rough draft and partly (Tableaux I and II) also in orchestral score. Whenever I felt slightly tired, I stopped work for a day or two at the utmost and then with as great a will once more picked it up where I had dropped it. I have said that the work of composing went on according to the original plan; Sadko's wife, Lyubava Booslayevna, had not been compassed in this plan, and, therefore, the

[1] Written January 24, 1904.

present Tableau III of the opera did not exist as such. Nor, of course, did the scenes dealing with Lyubava Booslayevna in Tableaux IV and VII, exist either. Moreover, the scene in the public square was incomparably less developed than subsequently: the wandering pilgrims and Nyezhata did not appear in it, and, besides, Sadko's recital of his adventures in Tableau VII did not include the participation of the chorus.

In the middle of the summer I was visited at Vyechasha by Vladimir Ivanovich Byel'ski, who had been introduced to me and had become intimate with me the previous year at St. Petersburg. He was spending this summer at the Ryeteñ estate, some six or seven miles away from Vyechasha. A keen, educated, scholarly man, graduated from two faculties—law and natural sciences—and an excellent mathematician to boot, Vladimir Ivanovich was a great connoisseur and lover of Russian antiquity and ancient Russian literature—*bylinas* (epic songs), songs, etc. To judge by appearances, this modest, bashful and most upright man could not even be suspected of possessing the knowledge and intellect which came to the fore on closer acquaintance. A passionate lover of music, he was one of the warm partisans of modern Russian music in general and of my works in particular.

During his stay at Vyechasha I played him some of the music I had composed for *Sadko*. He was in utter rapture. As a result, there cropped up endless talks about the subject and its details. The idea occurred of introducing Sadko's wife and making certain additions in the folk-like scenes of the opera, but for the time being all remained mere talk, and I could not bring myself to make any changes, for the scenario was engrossing and well-knit even without them. In August, when the rough draft of the whole opera had been finished according to the original plan, my thoughts began to turn to Sadko's wife. It is laughable, but at that time I developed an indefinable longing for the F-minor tonality, in which I had composed nothing for a long time and which thus far I had made no use of in *Sadko*. This unaccountable yearning for the key of F-minor drew me irresistibly to compose Lyubava's aria, for which I jotted down the verses on the spot. The aria was composed; it was to my liking and led to the origin of the third tableau of the opera, for which I asked Byel'ski to write the rest of the text. Thus, at the end of the summer, it became definite

that there was to be an additional tableau in my opera and that in conformity with it, much must be added in Tableaux IV and VII —the additions occasioned by the introduction of the figure of the beautiful, loving, and faithful Lyubava. Thus finished late in the summer, that is, finished in accordance with the original plan, the opera turned out to be unfinished, after all, as that plan was now growing more comprehensive, the more so as greater development of the folk-scene at the beginning of Tableau IV was also proving advisable.

CHAPTER XXIV

1895–97

Orchestrating *Sadko*. Production and adventures of *Christmas Eve*. Work on *Boris* and completing *Sadko*. *Boris* at the Society of Musical Gatherings. Russian Symphony Concerts and Glazunoff. The operas *Mlada, Christmas Eve,* and *Sadko* compared. Writing songs. Beginning of *Mozart and Salieri.*

On moving back to St. Petersburg, I did not, however, undertake to carry out all my new intentions, particularly as I had entrusted Byel'ski with writing for me the new portions of the libretto, and he was faced with a huge and difficult task. In the meantime I set out to orchestrate the parts of the opera that were not to undergo any changes, such as Tableaux V and VI, as well as considerable portions of Tableaux IV and VII. I recall that the first half year I was completely occupied with pondering and writing a rather complicated orchestral score, and that toward the end of winter I had developed a feeling of fatigue, nay, I may say even of indifference and almost aversion toward this work. This frame of mind manifested itself for the first time then, but subsequently it would recur invariably toward the end of all my major works. It always made its appearance suddenly somehow: the work of composition would run on as it should, with complete enthusiasm and concentration; then, suddenly, weariness and indifference would creep on from apparently nowhere. After a lapse of time this sickening mood would pass of its own accord, and I would again resume work with all my former zeal. This mood had no resemblance whatever to the one I had experienced during the years of 1891–93. There was no terrifying thought rambling through philosophic and æsthetic jungles. On the contrary, from then on, I was ever ready, perfectly calmly, without fear and without pain, to play at home-spun philosophizing, as nearly everybody does, to discuss matters weighty, "to ponder uni-

verses"[1] as a pastime, to turn upside down the beginnings of all beginnings and the ends of all ends.

The première of *Christmas Eve* was set for November 21, as a benefit performance to commemorate O. O. Palyechek's twenty-five years of service as a teacher of stage-deportment. The following circumstances had preceded the performance. As usual there were rehearsals, orchestral and choral. The rôles had been distributed as follows: Vakoola—Yershoff; Oksana—Mme. Mravina; Solokha—Mme. Kamyenskaya; the Devil—Chooprynnikoff; the Dyak (Sexton)—Oogrinovich; Choob—Koryakin; the Mayor—Mayboroda; the Tsaritsa (Queen)—Pil'ts. Vsyevolozhski kept amusing himself with the schemes for the mise-en-scène, and hence everybody worked hard—the scenery and costumes were on a lavish scale, the rehearsing was fine. Finally the dress-rehearsal was announced, with the public admitted on issued tickets. Simultaneously a placard appeared with a complete and accurate designation of the dramatis personæ, as per the libretto. The Grand Dukes Vladimir Alyeksandrovich and Mikhayil Nikolayevich came to the dress-rehearsal and both of them showed indignation at the presence (on the stage) of the queen, in whom they insisted on recognizing the Empress Catherine II. Vladimir Alyeksandrovich was roused to particular exasperation by it.

After the end of the dress-rehearsal, all the performers, the stage-managers and the theatre-administration lost heart and changed their tune, saying that the Grand Duke had gone from the opera directly to the Emperor to ask that my opera be forbidden a public performance. For his part, the Grand Duke Mikhayil Nikolayevich ordered the cathedral to be daubed over on the drop representing St. Petersburg and the Pyetropavlovskaya Kryepost' (Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul) visible in the distance: in this fortress, he cried, his ancestors lay buried, and he could not permit it to be represented on the stage of a theatre. Vsyevolozhski felt utterly taken aback. Palyechek's benefit performance had been announced, the tickets were on sale; everybody was nonplussed and quite at a loss what to do. I considered my case lost, as, according to report, the Emperor had fully sided with Grand Duke Vladimir Alyeksandrovich and had withdrawn his sanction for producing my opera. Vsyevolozhski, who was eager

[1] Syeroff's phrase about Wagner.

to save Palyechek's benefit performance and his own production, suggested that I substitute a Most Serene Highness (baritone) for the *tsaritsa* (mezzo-soprano). From a musical point of view this change presented no difficulties: a baritone could easily sing the part of mezzo-soprano an octave lower, the part consisting of recitatives throughout, without a single ensemble. To be sure the result was not what I had had in mind, the result was foolish, it amounted to an absurdity, as the master of the queen's wardrobe turned out to be a Most Serene. Further explanations on the subject are superfluous on my part. True, it caused me both sorrow and amusement, but a human head is of no avail against a stonewall, after all,—so I consented. Vsyevolozhski began to "pull wires," through whom—I know not, but he did obtain, from the Emperor, permission to produce *Christmas Eve* with a Most Serene Highness instead of *tsaritsa*. Soon a poster, with this change, was placarded, and the opera produced as a benefit performance for Palyechek.

I did not attend the first performance, my wife and I staying at home. I wished, at least thereby, to show my displeasure at everything that had happened. My children were at the theatre. The opera won a decent success. Yastryebtseff brought a wreath to my house. After Palyechek's benefit, *Christmas Eve* was given once to all subscribers and three more times on non-subscription evenings. Of course, not one member of the Imperial family attended any of the performances, and after that Vsyevolozhski's attitude towards me and my compositions underwent a profound change.

During the season of 1895–96, the Russian Symphony Concerts (four in number) were given under the direction of A. K. Glazunoff and myself, the two of us sharing the program of each concert almost half in half.

My rapprochement with the leaders of the Society of Musical Gatherings, the brothers Davidoff, Goldenblum and others, a rapprochement that had taken place the previous season, beginning with the production of *Pskovityanka*, was progressing. This time the leaders in some way got together with Count A. D. Sheryemetyeff who had a full concert orchestra of his own, led by the conductor of the Court Orchestra, G. I. Varlikh. Count Sheryemetyeff's orchestra was permanently quartered at his estate Oolya-

novka, not far from the Ligovo station. Davidoff, Goldenblum and I with them visited the Count several times at Oolyanovka, whither the Count used to convey us by special train and then by horses. After dinner we heard his orchestra which performed program numbers fairly well. Once I tried out even the Coronation scene from *Boris Godunoff;* I was busy on it, just about that time, writing the orchestral score and making a fresh arrangement for piano and voices. By the way, at first the work of orchestrating *Sadko* and then work on *Boris Godunoff,* had so worn me out by springtime that I recall the following. On one occasion, I believe while finishing the piano score arrangement of the next to the last tableau, I kept thinking with repugnance that I still had the arrangement of the last tableau to do, and had a feeling of horror at the prospect of such a task. After I had ransacked my writings, I suddenly convinced myself that the arrangement of the last tableau had been done by me and quite recently, too. Of course, I felt very happy at having escaped so unpleasant a task for the future, but at the same time I was in a fright about myself and my memory. How in the world could I have forgotten that so sizeable a work had been done by me! That was bad; and, in any event, it showed deep fatigue.

The Society of Musical Gatherings, which planned to produce Schumann's *Genoveva* in the spring, had asked Count Sheryemetyeff to lend them his orchestra for the purpose. The Count consented, and *Genoveva* was given April 8th, with the assistance of his orchestra under Goldenblum's direction, at the Mikhaylovski Theatre, the use of which the Society had obtained from Vsyevolozhski.

For the summer of 1896 we did not intend to go to Vyechasha, where certain disorders had developed of late in the management; and we rented a summer home at Smyerdovitsy, on the estate of Baron Tiesenhausen, on the Baltic Railroad. In May we moved there. By then, I felt rested again and could once more resume work on *Sadko* as well as the additions to it.

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The manor at Smyerdovitsy proved very roomy, even too much so, for my family. Near the house there was a magnificent park; the rest of the locality had nothing attractive to offer: scrubby, ill-kempt woods, with stumps and hillocks everywhere; a miniature

lake with low banks and chilly water that permitted little indulgence in bathing. Not far from the house (approximately 1,700–1,800 feet away) ran the railroad road-bed; there the whistling of the train echoed and re-echoed. That summer Volodya and Nadya had the measles, which caused my wife and myself some anxiety. Nevertheless I worked on *Sadko* assiduously and to good purpose, as well as composing whatever had been lacking in accordance with my new plan; I also orchestrated much of it, namely Tableaux IV and VII. In Tableau IV, I developed the big folk-scene in the public square according to Byel'ski's text (with the wandering pilgrims and merry-andrews inserted) and also the scene between Lyubava and Sadko. In Tableau VII, Lyubava's Lament and her duet with Sadko were composed, Sadko's narrative was rewritten afresh and the finale of the opera developed. A few things I had to finish in the autumn, on returning to St. Petersburg. By arrangement with M. P. Byelyayeff the printing of my opera was undertaken.

V. I. Byel'ski visited me at Smyerdovitsy, and we had long talks with him and discussed the libretto of the opera *Sadko*.

As early as the spring of 1896, after the production of *Genoveva*, the Society of Musical Gatherings, which I. A. Davidoff had given up for reasons unknown to me, had asked me to accept the chairmanship of the Society. I consented. At the same time there sprang up in the Society the idea of a stage production of *Boris Godunoff* in my revision. Choral rehearsals had begun in the spring under my guidance. In the fall of 1896 they commenced once more and went on with the greatest zeal. Goldenblum and Alyeksey Avgustovich Davidoff assisted me with ardour. Soloists were engaged, and they studied their parts. With the Court Orchestra a rehearsal was conducted once by Goldenblum, both to test the orchestration and to weed out copyists' mistakes in the parts. For the performances a composite orchestra was planned as Count Sheryemetyeff had suddenly disbanded his orchestra that summer, and it was no longer in existence. The performances were announced for the large hall of the Conservatory. I do not remember who painted the scenery, but for the production of *Boris Godunoff* a rather considerable collection of money was made among certain lovers of music (among others, T. I. Filippoff, too, had contributed). I conducted the orchestral re-

hearsals; Alyeksey Avgustovich Davidoff and Goldenblum led and assisted in the wings. The opera was given under my direction on Thursday, November 28th. Boris was sung by Loonacharski· Shooyski—by Safonoff (subsequently prompter of the Imperial Russian Opera); Pimyen—by Zhdanoff; the False Dmitri—by Morskoy; Varlaam—by Stravinski; Marina—by Mme. Ilyina; Rangoni [1]—by Kyedroff. The opera went well and gained success. A slight, insignificant misunderstanding occurred only in the chorus of the wandering pilgrims, though it was remarked by none. I conducted correctly and attentively.

The second performance of *Boris Godunoff* and the third, took place on November 29th and December 3rd under Goldenblum's direction, and the fourth, on December 4th, was to be given again under mine; but suddenly I succumbed to an unaccountable timidity and handed the directing over to Goldenblum again. At one of the performances the part of the Nurse was sung by my daughter Sonya. In general, the cast varied slightly at each performance. After the production of *Boris Godunoff* the activity of the Society of Musical Gatherings abated somewhat, and the winter in general passed in the usual way.

At the Russian Symphony Concerts of this season there were played Glazunoff's wonderful Sixth Symphony in C-minor (first time); the Overture to Tañeyeff's *Oresteia;* Chaykovski's *Fatum;* [2] Rakhmaninoff's Symphony in D-minor, etc. These concerts were given under the direction of Glazunoff and myself; F. M. Blumenfeld played the accompaniments of the solo numbers in some of the concerts. The program of the concert of February 15th was devoted to Borodin's compositions, to commemorate the tenth an-

[1] The scenes of the plotting Jesuit Rangoni (in the Polish Tableau) have always been cut in the performances at the Metropolitan Opera House. J. A. J.

[2] The following quotation from the poet Batyushkoff, suggested to Chaykovski after he had completed the score, served as a motto to *Fatum* (Destiny):

Thou knowest what the white-haired Melchisedek
Said when he left this life: Man is born a slave;
A slave he dies; will even Death reveal to him
Why thus he laboured in this vale of tears,
Why thus he suffered, wept, endured—then vanished?

Mrs. Newmarch asserts that Chaykovski destroyed the score of this work, "but as he was fully aware of the existence of all the orchestral parts, it may be presumed that a restoration of this work would not be altogether disrespectful to the wishes of the composer." She gives the date of the first performance as March 15, 1869. C. V. V.

niversary of his death. Among these, his *Spyashchaya Knyazhna* (Sleeping Princess) was sung (by Mme. Markovich) with my instrumentation; to the latter nobody paid any attention, as nobody heard in the orchestra the familiar tapping out of seconds [1] (in days gone by that had been considered a great harmonic discovery, but to my mind it was merely an auditory delusion alone).

The author of *Raymonda* and of the *Sixth Symphony,* had by this time reached the gorgeous flowering of his enormous talent, leaving far behind him the deeps of *The Sea,* the jungles of *The Forest,* the walls of *The Kremlin* and those other compositions of his transition period. His imagination as well as his astounding technique had attained, at this time, the highest point of their development. By then he had become, as a conductor, an excellent interpreter of his own compositions; but neither the public nor the critics would or could understand that; his authority in music grew, not by the year, but by the day. His astounding ear for harmony and his memory for detail in the compositions of other people staggered all of us musicians.

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In manner and methods of composition, *Christmas Eve* and *Sadko* undoubtedly belong with *Mlada.* The insufficiency of purely contrapuntal work in *Christmas Eve;* the high development of interesting figurations; the proneness to sustained chords (Act III of *Mlada,* the nocturnal sky in *Christmas Eve,* the sea-deeps at the beginning of Tableau VI of *Sadko*); the glowing, rich orchestral colours—are the same as in *Mlada.*

Though they have a splendid ring in singing, the melodies are nevertheless of instrumental origin in the majority of cases. In all three operas the fantastic element is broadly developed. In each of these operas there is a skilfully wrought, complex folk-scene (the market in *Mlada;* the great *kolyadka,* Christmas caroling, in *Christmas Eve;* the scene in the town square, at the beginning of Tableau IV in *Sadko*). If *Mlada* suffers from meagre development of the dramatic element, which inadequately supplements its folk-wise and fantastic sides,—in *Christmas Eve* the fantastic and mythological elements, well-developed and even somewhat foisted upon it, weigh down the light drollness and humour of Gogol's theme much more than they do in *May Night.* The

[1] The accompaniment of the entire song is written in sustained seconds. J. A. J.

bylina (heroic) opera *Sadko* is more fortunate than its two immediate predecessors in this regard. The folk-life and the fantastic elements in *Sadko* do not, by their nature, offer purely dramatic claims; they are seven tableaux of fabulous, epic content. The real and the fantastic, the dramatic (as far as denoted by the *bylina*) and the folk-wise are here in complete harmony one with the other. The contrapuntal web, which had worn thin in the two previous operas and the orchestral compositions that had preceded them, begins to be restored again. *Mlada's* orchestral exaggerations had begun to disappear even in *Christmas Eve,* though the orchestra does not lose its picturesqueness; while in the matter of splendour, the orchestra of *Mlada* hardly anywhere surpasses the scene ("Gold! gold!") in Tableau IV of *Sadko.* The system of leading motives has been applied to a considerable extent and successfully, in all three operas. The comparative simplicity, harmonic and modulatory, in the realistic portions of the opera, and the over-refinements of harmony and modulation in the fantastic portions—is a procedure common to all three of the operas. But the feature that does single out my *Sadko* from the whole series of all my operas and possibly not my operas alone, but operas in general—is the *bylina,* epic-legendary, recitative. Whereas in *Mlada* and *Christmas Eve* the recitative (with few exceptions, such as the scene of the Sexton with Solokha, or the scene of the two peasant women in *Christmas Eve*), though correct in most cases, had been undeveloped and not characteristic, the recitative of the *bylina*-opera and especially that of Sadko himself is characteristic to an unheard of degree despite a certain internal uniformity of structure. This recitative is not conversational language, but a sort of conventionally-regulated narration of parlando-singing, of which the prototype may be found in the declamation of Ryabinin's [1] *bylinas.* Running through the entire opera as a red thread, this recitative invests the whole composition with the national historical character that can be fully appreciated only by

[1] Trofim Nikolayevich Ryabinin, a native of the bleak North (village of Syeryodki, Olonyetsk Government, on the White Sea). A maker of fishermen's nets, by trade, Ryabinin was a true rhapsode of *bylinas,* which he recited, cantillated by heart. His son, Ivan (1844), had a still larger repertory than his father, of 6000 verses, considerably differing. The son *recited* in St. Petersburg (1892), and R. K. probably refers to him. J. A. J.

a Russian. The chorus in 11/4; Nyezhata's *bylina;* the choruses on the ship; the melody of the verse about the *Golubinaya Kniga* (Dove Book) [1] are other details which help, on their part, to lend the opera its historical and national character. I imagine that of the three above-named folk-scenes in the last three operas, the scene in the public square (prior to Sadko's entrance) is the most elaborate and complex. The stage animation, the change of dramatis personæ and groups, such as wandering pilgrims, merry-andrews, soothsayers, gay women, etc., and the bringing them together, in conjunction with a clear and broad symphonic form (somewhat recalling a rondo)—cannot but be called successful and new. The fantastic scenes: the tableau on the bank at the Il'meñ Lake with the sea-princess's narrative, the catching of the goldfishes, the intermezzo preceding the scene in the submarine realm, the dancing of little rivers and little fishes, the procession of water-monsters, the wedding around the cytisus bush, the introduction to the last Tableau—are no whit inferior, in their fairy-tale colouring, to the corresponding scenes and moments of *Mlada* and *Christmas Eve.*

First hinted at in Pannochka and Snyegoorochka, the fantastic maidenly image, thawing and vanishing, makes a fresh appearance in the form of the shade of Princess Mlada and of the Sea Princess who turns into the Volkhova River. The variations of her cradle song, her farewell to Sadko and her disappearance I consider among the best pages of my music of fantastic nature. In this way *Mlada* and *Christmas Eve* have been for me, as it were, two major studies that preceded *Sadko;* while the latter, representing as it does the most faultless harmonic combination of an original subject and expressive music, brings to a proper close the middle period of my activity in the field of opera. I have purposely lingered in greater detail on the characterization of these three operas, in order to pass to the ideas that allured me in the latter half of the season of 1897.

I had composed no songs for a long time. Turning to Alyekscy Tolstoy's poems, I wrote four songs, and the feeling came over me that I was not composing in the same way as I used to. The

[1] Probably a misapplied reference to the symbol of the Holy Ghost. The book is full of Apocryphal mysticism. J. A. J.

melody of these songs, following though it did the sinuosities of the text, turned out purely vocal with me, that is it became such at its very birth with but mere hints of harmony and modulation in its train accompanying. The accompaniment formed and developed after the melody had been composed, whereas formerly, with few exceptions, the melody was created either as if instrumentally, (that is, apart from the text, though in harmony with its general purport) or it was stimulated by the harmonic foundation which occasionally preceded the melody. Feeling that my new method of composition was the true vocal music and feeling satisfied, too, with my first essays in this direction, I composed song after song to words by A. Tolstoy, Maykoff, Pushkin and others. By the time we removed to the country, I had well-nigh a score of songs ready. Besides this, I once sketched in a minor scene from Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri* (Mozart's entrance and part of his talk with Salieri), my recitative flowing freely, ahead of everything else, precisely like the melodies of my latest songs. I had a feeling that I was entering upon some new period and that I was gaining mastery of the method which heretofore had been quasi-accidental or exceptional with me.

With these thoughts, though without having outlined any definite plan for myself, I moved to our summer home at Smychkovo, four miles from Looga.

In the summer of 1897, at Smychkovo, I composed much and ceaselessly. My first composition was *Svityezyanka,* a cantata for soprano, tenor, chorus and orchestra, with music borrowed from an old song of mine. However, the new method of vocal composition was not utilized in it. Then followed a series of numerous songs, after which I turned to Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri,* in the form of two operatic scenes in recitative-arioso style. This composition was purely vocal indeed: the melodic web, following the sinuosities of the text, was composed ahead of all else; the accompaniment, fairly complicated, shaped itself later, and its first outline differed greatly from the final form of its orchestral accompaniment. I felt content: the result was something that was new for me, and it approached most closely the manner of Dargomyzhski in his *Stone Guest,* however, without the form and modulatory scheme of *Mozart and Salieri* being quite as much an accident as in Dargomyzhski's opera. For my accompaniment I took a reduced

orchestra. The two tableaux were connected by a fugue-like intermezzo, which I subsequently destroyed. [1] In addition to this I composed a bow-instrument Quartet in G-major and a Trio for violin, cello and piano, in C-minor. The latter composition remained unfinished, and both of these chamber-music compositions proved to me that chamber-music was not my field; I therefore resolved not to publish them.

In the middle of the summer I wrote two duets for voices—*Pan* and *The Song of Songs*, and toward the end of the summer—a vocal trio *Harvest-fly,* with a chorus of women's voices and accompaniment of an orchestra, on a text by A. Tolstoy.

On June 30th we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of our marriage, and I dedicated to my wife a song set to words by Pushkin—*Nyenastny dyeñ potookh* (The rainy day has died away) as well as four songs on texts by A. Tolstoy.

[1] This Intermezzo has been preserved among N. A.'s papers in the form of an orchestral score as well as of an arrangement for four-hands. Note by Mme. R. K.

CHAPTER XXV

1897–99

Sadko at S. I. Mamontoff's private opera. *Vyera Sheloga.* *The Tsar's Bride.* Russian Symphony Concert. *Snyegoorochka* at the Mariinski Theatre. The young composers of Moscow. *Tsar Saltan.* *Lay of Olyeg the Prophetic.* S. I. Tañeyeff.

During the first half of the season of 1897–98 I was engaged on preparing for publication my newly accumulated songs. The songs were published by Byelyayeff in two keys—for high voice and low voice. They had to be transposed, proofs had to be read, etc.

Mozart and Salieri, performed at home to the accompaniment of a piano, pleased everybody. V. V. Stasoff made a great to do about it. The Mozartean improvisation I had composed hit the mark, and proved of sustained style. G. A. Morskoy and M. V. Loonacharski were the singers. F. Blumenfeld was the accompanist.

That very autumn I submitted my *Sadko* to the Directorate of Theatres. For the purpose of becoming familiar with this work, a hearing was arranged. In the presence of Director Vsyevolozhski, Napravnik, Kondratyeff, Palyechek and others, as well as of several artists, the opera was performed to the accompaniment of a piano. F. Blumenfeld played the piano; I sang along and explained as much as I could. I must confess that Fyeliks was not in the vein for some reason, and played reluctantly and somewhat carelessly; I was nervous and soon grew hoarse. Apparently the listeners had understood nothing and not a soul seemed to like the opera. Napravnik was surly and sour. The opera was not played to the end "owing to the lateness of the hour." Evidently my composition had failed in Vsyevolozhski's eyes, and, having now become acquainted with it, he assumed an entirely different tone in his negotiations with me. He said that the confirmation of the repertory for the coming year did not depend

on him, but as ever—on the Emperor, who always scrutinized it personally; that there were other works which the Directorate was bound to produce at the desire of members of the Imperial family; but that notwithstanding and nevertheless he did not finally refuse to produce *Sadko*. But it was clear to me that this was untrue; and I made up my mind to leave the Directorate in peace, never again to trouble it with offers of my operas.

In December, there came from Moscow, to visit me, Savva Ivanovich Mamontoff, who had that year become head of a private opera company in Solodovnikoff's Theatre. He informed me that he intended, within a short time to produce *Sadko;* and this idea he actually carried out during the Christmas Holidays.

Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and I went to Moscow for the second performance. The scenery proved fairly good, although between Tableau V and VI there was an interruption in the music for change in scenery; some of the artists were good, but as a whole the opera had been poorly rehearsed. Esposito, an Italian, conducted. In the orchestra there rang many false notes; moreover, it lacked several instruments; in Tableau I, the choristers sang from the music they held in their hands as though it were a bill-of-fare; in Tableau VI the chorus did not sing at all, the orchestra alone playing. Everything was explained away by *the hurry of production*. Yet with the public the opera was an enormous success, and that is what was wanted. I was exasperated; but there were curtain calls and wreaths for me, the singers and S. I. gave me every mark of honour; the only thing that was left was to bow and thank them. Among the singers Syekar-Rozhanski, as Sadko, and Zabyela (wife of the painter Vrubel') as the Sea-Princess, distinguished themselves. Both were known to me, having been former pupils of the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

By Lent, Mamontoff's opera, in its entirety, turned up at St. Petersburg, with the theatre-hall of the Conservatory as its home. The performances were to open with *Sadko*. Assiduous rehearsals of the opera under my direction were begun. I drilled the orchestra with great care, together with Esposito who proved a very fair musician. Errors were corrected, difficult passages that had been performed in a slovenly manner were studied painstakingly; nuancing was strictly demanded. The chorus learned the passages in which they were weak, the soloists, too, received certain

suggestions, and *Sadko* was produced in quite a decent manner. The solo-singers, except possibly Byedlyevich (The Sea-King), whom I could not endure, were good. Zabyela sang magnificently and made a most poetic figure of the Princess; Syekar-Rozhanski, too, was in the right place. The opera pleased the public greatly, and was given several times. In addition to *Sadko,* there were performed *Khovanshchina;* Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice,* Chaykovski's *Maid of Orleans,* as well as *May Night* and *Snyegoorochka.* I conducted the first performances of the last two operas myself quite accurately. But the cast of artists in *May Night* was unsatisfactory, particularly Inozyemtseff, the Lyevko. As for Snyegoorochka, Mamontoff selected the young singer Paskhalova, a protégée of his. With a beautiful, though at the time small voice, she was utterly inexperienced and could do nothing with her part. To my regret, the rôle of Snyegoorochka was entrusted to Zabyela only at the final performance.

The Mamontoff Opera Company's visit at St. Petersburg lasted till the first week after Easter or possibly later, and enjoyed considerable success with the audiences; however, it did not draw full houses and occasionally, as in Gluck's *Orfeo,* played to almost empty houses. During the company's stay in St. Petersburg, we became well acquainted with N. I. Zabyela and her husband, the painter M. A. Vrubel'.

In the spring of 1898 I composed several more songs and turned my hand to the Prologue to Mey's *Pskovityanka—Boyaryña Vyera Sheloga,* treating it from two points of view: as a separate one-act opera, so to speak, and as the Prologue to my opera. Vyera's narrative I restored, with trifling modification, borrowing its content from the second and unrealized *Pskovityanka* version of the Seventies; thus, too,—the end of the act; on the other hand, the entire beginning as far as the cradle song and after it to Vyera's narrative, I composed anew, applying the newly-mastered methods of vocal music. I retained the former cradle-song, but gave it a new revision. The composition of *Vyera Sheloga* went rapidly and soon was finished together with its orchestration. Thereupon I set out to realize my ambition of long-standing—the composing of an opera on the subject of Mey's *Tsarskaya Nyevyesta* (The Tsar's Bride). The style of this opera was to be cantilena par excellence; the arias and soliloquies

were planned for development within the limits of the dramatic situations; I had in mind vocal ensembles, genuine, finished, and not at all in the form of any casual and fleeting linking of voices with others, as dictated by the present day requirements of quasi-dramatic truth, according to which two or more persons are not supposed to talk simultaneously. For this reason there were to be certain additions and modifications in Mey's text, in order to create lyric moments of greater or lesser length for arias and ensembles. These additions and modifications were undertaken at my request by I. F. Tyumyeñeff, well-versed in literature and antiquities, and a former pupil of mine with whom I had lately grown intimate again. Even before removing to Vyechasha, which we had rented again for the summer, I had already set to work on Act I. The summer of 1898 in dear Vyechasha passed quickly in composing *The Tsar's Bride,* and the work went rapidly and easily. During the summer, the entire opera was composed, and an act and a half were orchestrated. In the midst of this work the song *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on a text by Maykoff, was also composed. This latter and the song *The Nymph,* written in the spring, were subsequently dedicated to the Vrubel' pair.

The work of composing the ensembles—the quartet of Act II and the sextet of Act III—roused in me the particular interest of methods new to me; and I suppose that in the matter of cantilena and grace of independent part-writing, there had been no such operatic ensembles since Glinka's time. Taken in general, Act I of *The Tsar's Bride* presents possibly one or two somewhat dry moments; but after the folk-wise scene (in Act II) written by a hand that had already become expert, the interest begins to grow, and the touching lyric drama reaches powerful intensity in the course of the entire Act IV. *Tsarskaya Nyevyesta* proved to have been written for strictly defined voices and most gratefully for the singers, in addition. Despite the fact that the voices had been invariably held to the fore by me and the orchestra had been taken in its usual complement, the orchestration and the handling of the accompaniment proved effective and interesting everywhere. It is sufficient to point out the orchestral intermezzo, the scene of Lyubasha with Bomelio, the entry of Tsar Ivan, the sextet, etc. Lyubasha's song in Act I, I decided to leave entirely without accompaniment, with the exception of the intermediate chords be-

tween the stanzas, and this greatly frightened the singers who feared they might get off key. But their fear proved groundless, the range of the melody in the Æolian mode in G-minor proved to have been chosen so conveniently that all the singers, to my surprise, always kept up to pitch; I told them that my song was a magic one.

Contrary to my custom, in composing *The Tsar's Bride,* I did not utilize a single folk-theme, save the melody of *Slava,* demanded by the subject itself. In the scene in which Malyuta Skooratoff proclaims the will of Tsar Ivan who had chosen Marfa to be a wife unto him, I introduced the theme of Ivan Grozny (the Terrible) from *Pskovityanka* and combined it contrapuntally with the *Slava* theme. [1]

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At the beginning of the summer, my son Andrey who had completed his first year's examinations at the University, went for rest to the estate of the Dobrovol'skis, Latovka (Government of Khyerson), where my older son Misha was then on a mission from the University, for zoological studies. Soon Nadyezhda Nikolayevna, too, went to South Russia and, meeting Andrey, as had been agreed, the two together made a trip to Crimea to visit Masha's grave in Yalta. Thus our family found itself somewhat reduced in number in the early part of the summer in Vyechasha. The faithful Yastryebtseff spent a few days with us. Also Byel'ski dropped in on us; we had endless discussions with him on various opera-subjects suitable for me. Upon the return of Nadyezhda Nikolayevna and Andrey, we resumed our usual mode of living—all together. Almost every evening various chamber-music trios were played at our house, as my sons had then made considerable progress (Andrey on the violin, and Volodya on the piano), and with Nadyezhda Nikolayevna's assistance, chamber-music began to flourish among us.

In the autumn of 1898 I was occupied exclusively with the orches-

[1] Montagu-Nathan notes a decided Western influence in the music of this opera. "The subject, of course, is purely national, but the treatment in general is of a kind which savours of Mozart and the Italian opera." This dictum will appear to be absolute nonsense to any one who has heard *The Tsar's Bride,* one of the most characteristically Russian of the composer's works. It has consistently been more popular in Russia than any of the other Rimsky-Korsakoff operas. It was produced in New York, in a vile manner, by the Russian Grand Opera Company at the New Amsterdam Theatre, May 17, 1922. C. V. V.

tration of *The Tsar's Bride*. This work was interrupted only for a brief while, owing to my trip to Moscow to attend the production of *Boyaryña Vyera Sheloga* and *Pskovityanka* at Mamontoff's. The Prologue received scant attention, despite its excellent interpretation by Mme. Tsvyetkova. On the other hand, *The Maid of Pskov* enjoyed success, thanks to the highly-talented Shalyapin, whose Tsar Ivan was a creation beyond compare. *Sadko* was also performed. Dinners, mild drinking-bouts, arranged by S. I. Mamontoff, calls on the Vrubel's home, on Krooglikoff and others filled all my "free" time.

I invited N. I. Zabyela to sing my Prologue in concert form at one of the Russian Symphony Concerts of this season, and she willingly gave her consent. The monetary remuneration was not mentioned. Yet, there was in store an unpleasant situation out of which a way had to be found. Byelyayeff, who did not like soloists in general and singers, male and female, in particular, had established once for all a compensation of fifty rubles to a soloist per concert. To certain artists, who were in straitened circumstances, so slight a compensation could still be offered, as after all it meant just that much help to them; but to artists who did not feel the pinch of necessity, it was unthinkable to offer such beggarly compensation, and in their time I had asked Mme. Mravina and others to take part without any pay whatever and merely out of their interest in art. Nevertheless, an artist from Moscow could not be expected to travel to St. Petersburg and spend her own money on fare, etc. for the sake of a Russian Symphony Concert; while to offer her a compensation of fifty rubles was absurd. Despite all my talks with Byelyayeff, time and again, to the effect that in certain cases the remuneration must be increased, he would not listen. I offered Zabyela 150 rubles and, without telling her, added one hundred of my own to Byelyayeff's fifty. This remained a secret to both Zabyela and Byelyayeff; but in order to make up the loss, I expressed to Byelyayeff the desire to draw again the fee he had established for conducting the concerts, a fee I had waived several years before. To this M. P. gave his consent immediately.

In order to perform Vyera Sheloga's narrative, the participation of a second woman singer was necessary for the rôle of Nadyezhda. I secured one from among Mme. Iryetskaya's conservatory pupils, at a fee of fifty rubles, in accordance with Byelyayeff's

rule. The narrative was performed splendidly, although Zabyela's lyric soprano did not entirely suit the rôle of Vyera, which demands a more dramatic voice. The audience treated the music with comparative indifference. The cause of this attitude lay in the very character of the composition which needs a theatre and not a concert stage. Marfa's aria from *The Tsar's Bride,* sung by Zabyela, was liked, though receiving scant notice; but the Act IV aria given as an encore, to the accompaniment of the piano, was not noticed at all. The singer won a few plaudits, but nobody even attempted to find out what she had sung, while the critics expressed surmise that it was one of my new songs.

Evidently the Board of Directors of the Imperial Theatres felt somewhat ashamed that *Sadko,* which had met with success both in Moscow and St. Petersburg in private opera houses, had avoided the state theatres, which had not noticed it. On the other hand, after my uncomfortable experience with *Christmas Eve* in 1895, not a single opera of mine had been given on the Mariinski stage. One way or another, Vsyevolozhski suddenly conceived the desire of producing my *Snyegoorochka* with a magnificence befitting the Imperial Theatres. New scenery and new costumes were ordered, and the opera was produced on December 15th. The settings and costumes were really costly, dainty but utterly unfitted for a Russian fairy-tale. Moroz (Frost) proved something like Neptune, Lyel' resembled a Paris; Snyegoorochka, Koopava, Byeryendyey and others were decked out in like fashion. The architecture of Byeryendyey's palace and the little hut of Byeryendyeyevka village, the sun, painted in the cheapest woodcut style, at the end of the opera, were mismatched, to the verge of the ludicrous, with the subject matter of the spring fairy-tale. In all this, there were apparent both the inability to grasp the problem and the French mythological tastes of Vsyevolozhski. The opera was given with success. Mravina, the Snyegoorochka, was fine, but the omissions had not been restored, and the opera dragged till late, thanks to the interminable intermissions.

Towards Lent, Mamontoff's opera, this time with Truffi as conductor, paid its second visit to St. Petersburg. *Pskovityanka,* with *Sheloga; Sadko; Boris Godunoff* with Shalyapin, were the operas. *Mozart and Salieri* was also produced. Shalyapin won enormous success, and from this time dates his fame and the growth of his

FYODOR SHALYAPIN *in* RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF'S *Mozart and Salieri*

popularity. But taken all in all, Mamontoff's opera was not warmly enough attended; they made ends meet only thanks to S. I. Mamontoff's playing the Mæcenas.

We formed friendships with some of the opera-singers. On one of my visits to M. A. Vrubel', he showed me his painting *The Sea-Princess*. On the canvas, among other things, there was pictured dawn and the crescent in the shape of a sickle, the latter with its concave facing toward the dawn. I called the artist's attention to this error, explaining to him that in the morning, at dawn, only the waning moon can be seen, but never the new moon, and that, moreover, the convex side is always toward the sun. M. A. was convinced of his mistake, but would not consent to do his painting over again. I do not know whether the painting retained that astronomic absurdity or whether he changed it subsequently, after all.

* * * * * * *

Byelyayeff's circle was growing perceptibly. It was increased by those of my pupils graduating from the Conservatory, Zolotaryoff, Akimyenko, Amani, Kryzhanovski and Cheryepnin,[1] as well as by that star of first magnitude newly-risen in Moscow—the somewhat warped, posing and self-opinionated A. N. Skryabin. The other Moscow star, S. V. Rakhmaninoff, though his compositions had been performed in the Russian Symphony Concerts, kept apart, his works being published by Gutheil. In general, Moscow of late had become rich in young composer blood, such as Gryechaninoff, Koryeshchenko, Vasilyenko [2] and others; Gryecha-

[1] Nikolay Cheryepnin, born in 1873, abandoned his studies in the legal profession to become a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakoff. Probably his best-known works, both produced by the Russian Ballet, are *Le Pavillon d'Armide* and *Narcisse*. Fyodor Akimyenko, born in 1876, studied piano under Balakireff, harmony with Lyadoff, and composition with Rimsky-Korsakoff. Nevertheless, even in his early works, there is little trace of nationalistic influence, and after he had visited Paris, he fell distinctly under the influence of the modern impressionists and composed pieces entitled, *In the Luxembourg Gardens* and *Under the Arches of Notre Dame*. Kryzhanovski, born in 1867, is also an ecclectic. His compositions are mostly for piano. C. V. V.

[2] Sergey N. Vasilyenko, born in Moscow in 1872, won a gold medal for his cantata, *The Invisible City of Kityezh*, afterwards produced as an opera. His other works include a symphony in G-minor, and a symphonic poem, *The Garden of Death*. A. T. Gryechaninoff, born in Moscow in 1864, has written operas, symphonies, cantatas, and works in several other forms. His works show German influence. He wrote the first Russian revolutionary anthem. A. N. Koryeshchenko, born 1870, pupil of Tañeyeff and Aryenski at the Moscow Conservatory, has written three operas, a ballet, and a large number of instrumental works. His style is said to be based on the music of Chaykovski and Aryenski. C. V. V.

ninoff, however, was partly a denizen of St. Petersburg as being a former pupil of mine. Together with these, there began to appear also signs of decadence wafted from Western Europe. Of Skryabin I shall speak later on.

During the winter I often saw V. I. Byel'ski, and, together with him, worked up Pushkin's *Fairy-tale of Tsar Saltan* as a subject for an opera. Our interest was also attracted by the legend of the *Invisible City of Kityezh* in connection with the legend of St. Fyevroniya of Moorom; we were drawn also to Byron's *Heaven and Earth,* as well as to *Odyesseus at the Palace of King Alcinoüs* and other things, but all of it was put off for some future occasion, our attention focussing on *Saltan* for which we discussed the scenario together. With the coming of spring, V. I. began to write his splendid libretto, making use of Pushkin as much as was possible, and artistically as well as skilfully imitating his style. He would hand me the scenes one by one, as they were finished, and I set to work on the opera. By the summer (which we had made up our minds to spend at Vyechasha as before) the Prologue (Introduction) was ready in sketch.

Exactly as the case had been with *Tsarskaya Nyevyesta* (The Tsar's Bride) the previous summer, the entire *Saltan* was composed, and its prologue, Act I and part of Act II were orchestrated during the summer of 1899. The libretto came to me piecemeal, continuously from Byel'ski. *Saltan* was composed in a mixed manner which I shall call instrumental-vocal. Its entire fantastic part belonged rather to the first manner, the realistic part to the second manner. As far as the application of purely vocal creative art is concerned, I was particularly pleased with the prologue. The entire dialogue, of the two sisters with Babarikha, after the ditty for two voices; the younger sister's phrase; Saltan's entrance, and the closing conversation flow freely with strictly musical sequence. And yet the really melodic element lies invariably in the voices, which latter do not cling to fragments of melodic phrases in the orchestra. A structure of similar nature is to be found in the comic trio at the beginning of Act II of *May Night,* but there the musical edifice is far more symmetrical, it is subdivided into manifest units and it is less compact than here. The intention there, too, was excellent; but for execution the pre-eminence must be awarded to *Saltan.* Symmetry again, in the boasts of the

A. N. SKRYABIN *from the drawing by* E. ZAK

older sister and the middle one, invests the piece with an intentionally fairy-tale character. Act I, entirely bound with folk-life in its first half, grows dramatic in its second. The fantastic singing of the Swan-bird in Act II is in a way instrumental; but its harmonies are novel. The dawn and city's rise into view recall *Mlada* and *Christmas Eve* in method employed; but the solemn chorus, greeting Gvidon, written partly on an ecclesiastic theme of the third mode ("the churchly choir doth praise the Lord," as Pushkin's poem reads) stands alone. The marvels in the tales of the ship-masters are made real in the last tableau of the opera by a suitable development of that very music. The transformation of the Swan-bird into the Princess-Swan is based again on a similar development of previous leading motives and harmonies. In general, I have made wide use of the system of *leitmotive* in this opera, while the recitatives have been invested with a special character of fairy-tale naïveté. In memory of our nurse Avdotya Larionovna, who had died a year before, I took the melody of the lullaby she had sung to my children, for the nurses rocking little Gvidon to sleep.

The same summer, as a rest and a pastime, I wrote also *The Lay of Olyeg the Prophetic* for solo and chorus; however, I had conceived it the preceding winter. Yastryebtseff and Byel'ski, as usual, visited us at Vyechasha this summer also, and I let them see such new things as I had composed. As always, Yastryebtseff was somewhat hesitant at first hearings, but later went *into wild raptures* (his own pet expression). On the other hand, Byel'ski usually seized and mastered, from the first, the very "littlest" shreds of detail, thereby astonishing me not a little.

The first half of the season of 1899–1900 I spent on orchestrating *Skazka o Tsarye Saltanye*. This time there was to be no overture or prelude to my opera: the prelude was supplied by the introduction itself; that is, by the scenic prologue. Each act, on the contrary, was preceded by a long orchestral prelude with a program of definite content. But to make up for that, both the prologue and each of the acts or tableaux began with the same brief trumpet fanfare, which had the meaning of a call or invitation to hear and see the act which thus began immediately after it. This is a device quite original and suitable for a fairy-tale. Out of the rather longish orchestral preludes to Acts I, II and IV, I resolved

to put together a suite under the title: *Little Pictures to the Fairy-tale of Tsar Saltan.*

As early as the spring, when I set out to compose *Saltan,* I had spoken to Byelyayeff of it and inquired whether he would undertake to publish it. Byelyayeff replied more or less dryly and in the negative, stating that the ever-growing number of my operas was beginning to be a burden to his publishing business. Accordingly I offered *Saltan* to Bessel, who gladly consented to bring it out, though at an honorarium of two thousand rubles only; considerably less than the remuneration established by Byelyayeff. We had come to an agreement with Bessel, and he was now waiting only for me to finish the score. At this juncture Byelyayeff, who had developed an interest in the *Little Pictures,* made me an offer to publish them. I replied that I had already come to terms with Bessel. Evidently this refusal of mine, as well as my agreement with Bessel, offended Byelyayeff in a measure. But what was to be done? The fault lay with him not with me. Nevertheless this did not affect our relations, which remained as cordial as ever; but after that M. P. made up his mind not to publish any opera scores in general, ostensibly because of the accumulation of orchestral and chamber-music that begged publication so much more pressingly than operatic music for which publishers would always be found. However, he swerved from his own resolve, when he undertook the publication of Tañeyeff's *Oresteia.* It will be à propos to tell here that for some years past there had been appearing on the horizon a wonderful musician and highly trained teacher, Sergey Ivanovich Tañeyeff. Once a pupil of Chaykovski and N. G. Rubinstein at the Moscow Conservatory, an excellent pianist, Tañeyeff had been Professor of counterpoint at that Conservatory for many years. Absorbed as he was for many long years in research in the field of so-called double counterpoints and canons, as well as in preparing materials for a comprehensive text-book, he had rarely lent himself to composition; and, indeed, his compositions had been most dry and laboured in character. I recall him then still a very young man, but recently graduated from the Conservatory, coming to St. Petersburg to show his piano concerto.[1] I remember also a later visit of his, with his cantata *Johannes Damascenus.*

[1] I find no record of a piano concerto anywhere. Only a piano-quartet in G-minor, op. 20. J. A. J.

I remember also his *Solemn Overture* in C-major with its extraordinary contrapuntal subtleties, which was performed at a concert of the Russian Musical Society in the Eighties.

Tañeyeff of the Eighties had been a man of glaringly conservative opinions in musical art. Toward Glazunoff's early appearances he had shown deep distrust; Borodin he had considered a clever dilettante and no more; and Musorgski had merely made him laugh. Probably he had placed no high estimate on Cui, either, as well as on me. But my study of counterpoint (about which he had learned from Chaykovski) had unbent him toward me in some measure. He worshipped Chaykovski; and Chaykovski had singled me out from the rest of the St. Petersburgers surrounding me. His opinion concerning Balakireff is unknown to me; but I do know of his clash with Balakireff at a rehearsal of the concert during the festivities in connection with the unveiling of a monument to Glinka at Smolyensk [1] where Mili Alyekseyevich conducted a concert of works by Russian composers. Honest, upright Tañeyeff always spoke sharply and frankly. On the other hand, Balakireff, of course, could never forgive Tañeyeff his harshness and frankness with regard to his own person.

In the Nineties, Tañeyeff's opinions of St. Petersburg composers underwent a marked change: he came to appreciate Glazunoff's activity; treated Borodin's compositions with respect; regarding only Musorgski with dislike and ridicule. This change in attitude coincided somehow with the beginning of the new period in his activity as composer, after he had thrown himself more freely into creative work and was guiding himself by the ideals of contemporary music,—though still preserving his astounding contrapuntal technique. He arrived in St. Petersburg with his recently finished opera *Oresteia,* played it at our house, and astonished us all with pages of extraordinary beauty and expressiveness. He had been at the composition of his opera for a long time, possibly ten years. Before setting out for the real expounding of a composition, Tañeyeff used to precede it with a multitude of sketches and studies: he used to write fugues, canons and various contrapuntal interlacings on the individual themes, phrases and motives of the coming composition; and only after gaining thorough experience in its component parts, did he take up the general plan

[1] May 20, 1885. J. A. J.

of the composition and the carrying out of this plan, knowing by that time, as he did, and perfectly, the nature of the material he had at his disposal and the possibilities of building with that material. The same method had been applied by him in composing *Oresteia.* It would seem that this method ought to result in a dry and academic composition, devoid of the shadow of an inspiration; in reality, however, *Oresteia* proved quite the reverse—for all its strict premeditation, the opera was striking in its wealth of beauty and expressiveness.

The opera was submitted to the Directorate, and was produced at the Mariinski Theatre. Napravnik dodged conducting *Oresteia* and let Krooshevski do it. The opera met with instant public favour. Yet after the first two or three performances the Directorate (I imagine with Napravnik's connivance) introduced many cuts. The composer was exasperated, refused to sign a contract with the Directorate, and the opera was stricken from the repertory. Byelyayeff, who liked the opera, quite sympathized with Tañeyeff; and indignant at the Directorate's conduct, he immediately proposed to Tañeyeff to publish his opera for him. The publication was begun forthwith. Tañeyeff revised and signally improved the orchestration which had not been uniformly satisfactory. It is worthy of note that thereafter Tañeyeff began to avail himself of Glazunoff's advice in orchestration; of course, he now made rapid strides in that field.

Now then, the business of publishing my operas beginning with *Saltan* had passed into the hands of Bessel who also took over my *Olyeg.* Nevertheless the *Little Pictures for the Fairy-tale of Tsar Saltan* were announced for performance at the Russian Symphony Concerts; but the *Lay of Olyeg the Prophetic* I promised for the concerts of the Russian Musical Society, at the request of its Directorate.

In the autumn, Mamontoff's Opera Company in Moscow studied *The Tsar's Bride,* and I made a trip to that city to attend rehearsals and the first performance. The opera was a success. Once more curtain-calls, wreaths, suppers, etc. Zabyela, in the rôle of Marfa, sang excellently; the high notes in her arias rang out wonderfully, but, as a whole, this rôle suited her less well than the rôle of the Sea-Princess, and her costume, made, as ever, according to her husband's sketch, could hardly be called felicitous

this time. Syekar-Rozhanski who sang the part of Lykoff, requested me to write an aria for him, pointing out a suitable moment for it in Act III. I had never composed special arias for anybody; but this time I could not help agreeing with him, as his remark about the over-inopportune brevity and incompleteness of Lykoff's part was quite correct. On my return to St. Petersburg, I asked Tyumyeñeff to write suitable words, and on Christmas I composed the aria in Act III; I sent it on to Syekar-Rozhanski and decided to interpolate it permanently into my opera.

Olyeg I led personally at the concert of the Russian Musical Society; the soloists were Sharonoff and Morskoy, the choir was very mediocre. Its success was slight. The composition won scant notice. The same thing had happened the previous year with *Svityezyanka.* I think that this is the fate of all cantatas, ballads, etc. for soloists and chorus with us; [1] our audiences do not like them and don't know how to listen to them. Nor do those performing at concerts like this form of composition: rehearsals have to be held, the choruses have to be drilled. The soloists like a plain solo, the choirs like merely separate choruses. The publishers, too, don't like these compositions, as nobody buys them. Very sad. . . .

The Russian Symphony Concerts of this season were, contrary to custom, given in the Grand Conservatory Hall, owing to repairs made at the Hall of the Club of the Nobility. *The Little Pictures for the Fairy-tale of Tsar Saltan* sounded brilliant in the orchestra and were much liked.

[1] This distaste is not peculiar to Russian audiences. C. V. V.

CHAPTER XXVI

1899–1901

Beginning of *Servilia*. *May Night* at the Frankfurt-on-Main Opera House. Trip to Brussels. *The Tsar's Bride* on a private stage in St. Petersburg. Composing and orchestrating *Servilia*. *Sadko* at the Imperial Opera. *Tsar Saltan* on a private stage in Moscow. Resignation from conductorship of Russian Symphony Concerts. 35th Anniversary. Various operatic plans.

Having done with the orchestral score of *Saltan* and having laid aside for the time being the subjects jointly worked out by Byel'ski and myself, I began to give more and more thought to Mey's *Servilia*. The plan of turning it into an operatic subject had come to me often even in former years. This time my attention was attracted to it in earnest. A subject dealing with ancient Rome gave one free rein in the matter of unhampered style. Anything was appropriate here, except what was *manifestly contradictory*, like the obviously German, the evidently French, the undoubtedly Russian, etc. Of antique music not even a trace has been preserved; nobody has heard it, nobody has a right to reproach the composer because his music is not Roman, provided the condition of avoiding what is *manifestly contradictory* has been observed by him. Consequently there was almost entire and complete freedom. But music outside of nationality does not exist, and, in its essence, all music which it is customary to consider universal, is national after all. Beethoven's music is German music; Wagner's indubitably German; Berlioz's—French; Meyerbeer's—also; possibly only the contrapuntal music of the old Flemings and Italians, music rooted in calculation rather than in direct feeling, is devoid of any national tinge. Accordingly, for *Servilia*, too, it was necessary to select in general some one most appropriate national colouring. Partly the Italian, partly the Greek colouring seemed to me the most suitable. As for the moments depicting the folk-

life, for dances with music, etc., according to my understanding, the Byzantine and Oriental tinge was highly appropriate there. For, indeed, the Romans possessed no art of their own, there was only what they had borrowed from Greece. On the one hand, I am convinced of the close kinship of ancient Greek music to the Oriental, while on the other hand I believe that the remains of ancient Greek music are to be sought in Byzantine art, of which the echoes are heard in the ancient orthodox church singing. These are the considerations that guided me when the general style of *Servilia* began to grow clear in my mind. I spoke to no one of my decision to compose *Servilia;* and, taking Mey's drama, I began to work out the libretto of my opera. There was little to recast and add; beginning with the latter half of the season of 1899–1900, musical ideas, too, began to crowd into my mind.

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The disturbances which commenced at the University [1] in the academic year 1898–99 caused my wife and me to prefer sending our son Andrey to one of the foreign universities. The Strassburg University was our choice. In the autumn of 1899 Andrey left for Strassburg. In the meantime the management of the Opera at Frankfurt-on-Main desired to produce my *May Night* and wrote to me for suggestive information. Whatever I could I suggested by letter, but that was manifestly insufficient, yet I saw no possibility of going there myself. Just before production time it turned out that Vyerzhbilovich [2] was going to Frankfurt, where he had been engaged to appear in concerts. I asked him to call at the Opera House, upon his arrival in Frankfurt, and in my name to give them certain directions that had to do chiefly with the mise-en-scène, the folk-life side of the opera, and the acting, lest there creep in some too palpable absurdities in the sense of interpreting Ookrainian life, with which the Germans were entirely unfamiliar. However, Vyerzhbilovich, who had amiably and obligingly undertaken this errand, did absolutely nothing, and never

[1] The famous massacre of student-youth of both sexes by Cossacks on Vasilyevski Ostrov (Island) occurred on Feb. 8, 1899. These disturbances and slaughters of students were a chronic disease in Russia, the massacre of March 4, 1901, being especially notorious. J. A. J.

[2] The great Russian cellist (1849–1911), pupil and successor of the famous Davydoff. J. A. J.

even showed up at the Frankfurt Opera House. Of course I should not have charged Vyerzhbilovich with any such errand. . . .

The performance was finally announced, and our Andrey, learning of it, slipped over to Frankfurt and was present at the first performance. The musical part, especially the orchestra, went not at all badly; but all the doings on the stage proved a shocking caricature. Thus, for example, the Mayor, the Scrivener and the Distiller, in the Second Tableau of Act II, knelt down and kept shouting: "Satan! Satan!" etc. The opera was given three times and then taken off the boards and immediately forgotten by everybody. As for the critics, they treated it condescendingly and that is all. The relations that sprang up with the Prague Opera were more successful: at Prague, in the course of several succeeding years, were produced *May Night, The Tsar's Bride* and *Snyegoorochka,* all with considerable success.

Having received an invitation to come to Brussels to conduct a concert of Russian Music at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, I went there in March. This time a certain d'Aoust, a wealthy and well-trained music lover, was at the head of affairs. Joseph Dupont was no longer among the living. I had a cordial reception. D'Aoust and his family were most attentive and amiable; there were rehearsals aplenty, exactly as on my former visit, and the performance itself was excellent. I put on *Sadko, Shekherazada,* a suite from Glazunoff's *Raymonda,* etc. *Sadko* pleased moderately, *Shekherazada* very much. The concert was attended by Vincent d'Indy, but he did not come in to see me in the green-room. I met many of my former Brussels acquaintances, but did not get to see Gevaert, as he was ill. All in all, my trip was a success. On returning home, I set to work assiduously on *Servilia.*

During the Easter Season the Kharkoff private opera company under the management of Prince Tsereteli, began a season of performances at Panayeff's Theatre in St. Petersburg. Among others they gave also *Tsarskaya Nyevyesta.* The talented M. N. Insarova made a beautiful figure as Marfa. But I was extremely exasperated by the cuts: the Sextet in Act III and the ensemble during Marfa's fainting spell had been omitted. I asked the conductor Suk (a thorough musician) for an explanation; he told me that they had been in a hurry with the production of *The Tsar's*

Bride in Kharkoff, and had made cuts to speed matters. Again haste was the cause! But in reality it was laziness and a slipshod attitude toward music. Nobody even thinks of the impression of the whole. Why rehearse some sextet or other, when it is possible to do without it? The opera can be studied more rapidly and the money diddled out of the public. Indeed, the public pays the same money for the opera *with* the sextet and *without* the sextet. The friendly critics are not familiar with the opera and, consequently, will praise in equal measure a production with the sextet and one without the sextet; while unfriendly critics will abuse in equal measure, anyway. How disgusting! and yet there is no redress for a situation which could be alleviated only by sound criticism and sound audiences. The author's rights can be of but slight help in such cases. How, indeed, can an author residing in St. Petersburg keep track of what is going on in Kharkoff or Kiyeff? But a good musician like Suk ought to feel ashamed to make such cuts, since they clearly reduce his own worth as a musician. In addressing these words to Suk, I address them to all other opera conductors. I insisted that the sextet be restored, and this was done after a few performances. And how much the opera gained thereby and how pleased the artists themselves felt! As for the ensemble of Act IV, I did not succeed in having that restored, owing to lack of time, after all.

Late in the autumn, V. A. Tyelyakovski, Director of the Moscow State-Theatres came to see me quite unexpectedly. The purpose of his visit was to ask me to let him have my *Skazka o Tsarye Saltanye* (Fairy-tale of Tsar Saltan) for production at the Grand Moscow Theatre the following season. I had to refuse him, as I had already promised that opera to the company of Solodovnikoff's Theatre. Of course I felt regret that the management had come to this notion a bit too late; but it could not be helped, and I had to refuse. I suggested to Tyelyakovski that he put on some other of my compositions, *Pskovityanka* for example, the more so as Shalyapin [1]—the inimitable Tsar Ivan—was at his disposal, since joining the Imperial Opera. Tyelyakovski gladly accepted my suggestion, but the production of *The Maid of Pskov,* as it turned out afterwards, took place only a year later.

[1] Fyodor Ivanovich Shalyapin (born in 1873) was then barely 27 and had been famous for four years. J. A. J.

We decided to spend the summer en famille abroad near my son Andrey who was studying at the University of Strassburg. Via Berlin and Cologne we followed the Rhine as far as Mainz, and, after a brief stop in Strassburg, settled for a fairly long stay at Petersthal, in the mountains of the Schwarzwald. Andrey usually came to spend the week-ends with us. When the University vacations came, he and the rest of us went to Switzerland, where we lived chiefly at Vitznau by the Lake of the Four (Forest) Cantons,[1] on the slope of the Rigi Mountain. After visiting Lausanne and Geneva we made a very successful trip to Chamonix with full opportunity to gaze to our hearts' content at Mont Blanc and walk among its foothills (Mer de Glace, Mauvais Pas, etc.). Our return journey lay again via Berlin. We returned to St. Petersburg by September.

I had no piano either at Petersthal or at Vitznau, where we made long stays. Nevertheless the work of composing *Servilia* got along without the aid of a grand piano. Act III and IV were jotted down in their entirety, and Act I and V, in part. The only opportunity I had to play these on the piano was at Lucerne, where there was an excellent concert grand at the Catholic Society's Hotel. True, music written without the aid of a piano is distinctly "heard" by the composer; nevertheless, when chance offers one an opportunity to play (on the piano) for the first time a considerable quantity of music composed without a piano, there is a peculiar impression, unexpected in its way, and one to which the composer has to grow accustomed. The cause of this probably lies in being weaned from the sound of the piano. During the process of composing an opera the tones imagined mentally belong to voices and the orchestra, and when performed for the first time on the piano, they sound somewhat strange.

Accordingly, on my return to St. Petersburg, I brought with me (including what I had composed in the spring) Acts I, III and IV complete, a few things for Act II, and the half-composed Act V, which I finished in a short time; only the work of composing Act II dragged somewhat. I immediately turned to the orchestration. I took the usual make-up of orchestra, exactly as in *The Tsar's Bride,* with the bass-clarinet added here and there. The prevailing dramatic theme of *Servilia* like the theme of *The*

[1] Lac des quatre-cantons, Ger. Vierwaldstättersee, also known as Lake of Lucerne. J. A. J.

FYODOR SHALYAPIN *as* IVAN THE TERRIBLE
in RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF'S *Pskovityanka,* Act III

Tsar's Bride, demanded a purely vocal manner of composing; in this field I felt quite free now, and my vocal phrases as well as melodies proved tuneful and full of substance. As for the orchestration, my task this time seemed to me to demand that I not merely refrain from drowning the voices but rather give them good support and help them, and this I achieved, as was proven subsequently in the performance. I imagine that Servilia's aria in Act III, and her death scene in particular, hit the mark in this respect. The subject matter of *Servilia* presented but a single opportunity for resorting to a broad vocal ensemble. This moment proved to be the quintet at the end of Act III. I believe that this quintet, with its beginning enunciated in canon-form, is not inferior to the similar forms of *The Tsar's Bride* in its sonorousness and its delicacy of part-writing; yet, being interrupted by the messenger's entrance, it does not produce the full impression on the hearers, as the latter love emphasized and definite endings and are not sufficiently developed as yet to grasp ensembles interrupted for dramatic purposes. The material for the closing multivoiced *Credo* had been borrowed by me from the closing *Amen!* of the second version of *Pskovityanka,* where it was out of place. I cannot help feeling pleased with the transition from the voices of the soloists to the voices of the chorus growing crescendo in this *Credo.* As in my preceding operas, the system of leading motives was applied on a wide scale in *Servilia.* Thus the work of orchestrating *Servilia* preoccupied me during the first half of the season; after that I finished composing and brought into order the missing Act II. Here the ensemble of the banqueting Romans, Montanus's declamation and the dance of the Mænads, as folk-life elements, were rigorously sustained by me in Greek modes. Toward spring the entire work was finished, and its printing undertaken by Bessel.

I. V. Vsyevolozhski was replaced by S. M. Volkonski.[1] The new Director immediately proceeded to produce *Sadko* at the Mariinski Theatre. The scenery was painted from the sketches of A. Vasnyetsoff; the costumes also were made after his drawings. The best artists from among the company were pressed into serv-

[1] Prince Sergey M. Volkonski lectured at the University of Chicago, the lectures being printed pp. 355–84, *Progress,* Feb. 1897 (Chicago) and as *Pictures of Russian History and Russian Art* (Boston; 1897) (Lowell Lectures XII+283 pp.). J. A. J.

ice. The Princess was sung by Bol'ska, Sadko by Yershoff, who however for some reason (intrigue or caprice) did not sing at the first performance, being replaced by Davydoff. Napravnik did the rehearsing and conducting without a frown; nevertheless he subsequently yielded my opera to Fyeliks Blumenfeld who had by that time been placed on an equal footing with Krooshevski. Thus *Sadko* was finally produced at the Imperial Theatre, (high time long ago!) but for this a new broom in the person of Prince Volkonski proved necessary. The opera went excellently. It was a pleasure at last to hear my music with a large orchestra and after proper rehearsing. The "so-so" performances of private opera-houses were beginning to oppress me. After the first three or four performances Yershoff, too, made his appearance and gave prominence to the rôle of Sadko. *Sadko* was given with some cuts that I had marked myself, as, in my opinion, things dragged. Subsequently, however, I came to the conclusion that, with slight exceptions, even those cuts were undesirable. Nyezhata's *bylina* is indeed a bit too long and monotonous, but with the cut a fine orchestral variation is lost. The scene on the ship, even though longish in itself, hardly gains by cutting. Here a cut is more in place at the departure of the ship, when Sadko has descended on a plank, with his *goosli* (dulcimer). An omission of the repeats of certain parts in the dances of little rivers and goldfishes, is perhaps desirable. But a sizeable cut in the finale of the opera spoils things after all. If *Sadko* lives some fifteen or twenty years longer on the stage, it is likely these cuts will be done away with, as in the case of Wagner's operas which were formerly given abroad with cuts and are now performed uncut.[1]

Prior to the production of *Sadko,* I made a trip to Moscow in October to attend the production of *Tsar Saltan* by the company of Solodovnikoff's Theatre. The so-called Mamontoff Opera had lost its patron this year. S. I. Mamontoff was jailed for debts incurred as a result of some commercial mishaps in building the Arkhangel'sk Railroad. His opera company organized into an association and began to perform independently, with almost the same personnel as at Solodovnikoff's Theatre. *Saltan* was produced as well as could be expected of a private company. The scen-

[1] This is an error. Wagner's music dramas are seldom performed without cuts, never, probably, out of Germany. C. V. V.

ery had been painted by Vrubel', the costumes were made also after his drawings. Mootin as Saltan, Syekar-Rozhanski as Gvidon, Tsvyetkova as Militrisa, Zabyela as the Swan and all the others were fine. Even the Courier was sung by the prominent baritone Shevelyeff. As before, M. M. Ippolitoff-Ivanoff was the conductor. The opera [1] had its première on October 21, with much success. I received several gifts.

Beginning with this season, I resigned from the conductorship of the Russian Symphony Concerts, though remaining their director-in-chief. Conducting had ceased to have attractions for me; I could not make any advance in this field,—I was too old for that; in the sense of conducting, the Russian Symphony Concerts offered no complete satisfaction, the orchestra was not sufficiently large in the personnel of its strings; and then it was high time to yield to younger blood. I decided to conduct only occasionally, when circumstances should make it necessary for some reason or other. The R. S. Concerts passed on to Lyadoff and Glazunoff, and subsequently to F. Blumenfield and Cheryepnin. However, this very season I had to conduct one concert of the Russian Musical Society of Moscow, whither I was called by V. I. Safonoff [2] who had fallen dangerously ill.

This concert had been set for December 23, while on December 19, 1900, occurred the thirty-fifth anniversary of my activity as composer. The Moscow Private Opera Company, availing itself of my presence in Moscow, announced a performance of my *Sadko* for December 19, sent me an invitation and arranged a celebration of my jubilee. On the same evening, owing to my anniversary, the Grand Theatre produced my *Snyegoorochka;* having been invited by the Private Opera Company, however, I could not simultaneously attend the performance of *Snyegoorochka,* and this had a somewhat disadvantageous effect on my relations with the Moscow Directorate of Imperial Theatres. I regret it.

I was also honoured at the concert of the Russian Musical Society. Worn out by all these ovations, I returned to St. Peters-

[1] For an enumeration of the folksongs used in *Tsar Saltan,* see a footnote on Page 317 of Rosa Newmarch's *The Russian Opera.* C. V. V.

[2] Vasili Ilyich Safonoff (1852–1918), Director of the Moscow Conservatory, a prominent pianist and world-known conductor, was conductor of the New York Philharmonic Society 1903–6 as guest conductor and 1906–9 as its permanent and sole leader. J. A. J.

burg. But here a sort of continuous round of honours during a whole month was in store for me. Now this and now that musical society arranged a concert of my compositions, invited me to dinner or supper, showered me with addresses and wreaths. There were so many of these greetings and festivities that I cannot begin to ennumerate them—everything has grown confused in my head. V. V. Yastryebtseff probably knows the particulars. I am grateful for all of it, but it was all unbearably boring and tiresome. I called my jubilee "chronic," like unto a lingering disease. Indeed to hear day after day: "Deeply honoured Nikolay Andreyevich! During thirty-five years . . ." or "It is thirty-five years since . . ." is unbearable. And I don't believe, in fact, in the sincerity of it all. It seems to me that my jubilee in some cases did service merely as an advertisement, as an opportunity to nudge the world concerning the advertisers themselves. Only the Directorate of the Imperial Theatre took no part; and for this I give it my profound thanks. Of course, had I at all been able to foresee what a protracted form my jubilee would take, I should have fled in good season and as far as I could; but of that I had not even a suspicion, and having accepted greetings from one, it was unbecoming to refuse another. I wish no one a jubilee of like nature! . . .

During the season I continued pondering various subjects for operas. At my request, I. F. Tyumyeñeff wrote an original libretto, *Pan Voyevoda,* being guided by my specifications. I gave him an order for a play from Polish life of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, of dramatic content, but without political colouring. The fantastic element was to be present in a limited degree in the form, perhaps, of fortune-telling or witchcraft. Polish dances, too, were a desirable consideration.

The thought of writing an opera on a Polish subject had long engrossed me. On the one hand, several Polish melodies, sung to me by my mother in my childhood, still haunted me, though I had already made use of them in composing a mazurka for the violin. On the other hand, Chopin's influence on me was indubitable, in the melodic turns of my music as well as in many of my harmonic devices; but this fact the gimlet-eyed critics had never observed, to be sure. The Polish national element in Chopin's compositions (which I worshipped) always roused my delight. In

an opera on a Polish subject I wished to pay homage to my rapture for this side of Chopin's music, and it seemed to me that I was capable of writing something Polish, national. The libretto of *Pan Voyevoda* suited me perfectly; in it Tyumyeñeff had cleverly touched upon the folk-life element; the drama itself had nothing new to offer, but it presented grateful moments for music. Nevertheless the composing of *Pan Voyevoda* was put off for the time being. With V. I. Byel'ski I had discussed and worked out the subjects of *Nausicaä* and *The Tale of the Invisible City of Kityezh;* fragments of the libretto of the first had even been written by V. I. However, a different subject had riveted my attention.

One fine day there came to see me Y. M. Pyetrovski, an assistant of N. F. Findeisen in the publishing of *The Russian Musical Gazette,* a man of education, a good musician, a fine and witty music critic and a passionate, irrevocable Wagnerite. He offered me a fanciful libretto in four short tableaux, which he had written, ---under the title *Kashchey the Deathless.* This libretto gripped my interest. But I found it to long-drawn in its last two tableaux, nor did I like the versification. I stated my doubts to Pyetrovski, and shortly afterwards he submitted to me a different and more comprehensive version of the same subject; this, however, I did not like at all. Preferring it in its first garb, I resolved to puzzle out the necessary changes myself. Thus the matter rested without any definite settlement, and I left town for my summer stay, without knowing what to take up first.

CHAPTER XXVII

1901–05

Composing the prelude-cantata *From Homer* and *Kashchey the Deathless. Vyera Sheloga* and *The Maid of Pskov* at the Grand Theatre in Moscow. omposing *Pan Voyevoda.* New orchestration of *The Stone Guest. Servilia* at the Mariinski Theatre. *Kashchey* on a private stage in Moscow. Composing *The Story of Kityezh. Sheloga* and *Pskovityanka* at the Marinski Theatre. *Tsar Saltan* on a private stage. Byelyayeff's death and his last will. *Pan Voyevoda* and *Servilia* on private stages. *Boris Godunoff* at the Mariinski Theatre. Death of Laroche.

The summer of 1901 we spent at the estate Krapachookha, near the Station Okoolovka. Early in the summer I was still engaged in orchestrating Act II of *Servilia,* which was then on the presses. Having done with *Servilia,* I composed a prelude-cantata, as if to serve as proem to *Nausicaä.* The orchestral prelude depicted the stormy sea and Odysseus tossed thereon, while the cantata was, as it were, the singing of dryads meeting the sun's emergence and welcoming the rosy-fingered Dawn. As I had not definitively settled the fate of *Nausicaä,* I named my prelude-cantata *From Homer.*

Thinking over *Kashchey* [1] in the meantime, I arrived at the conclusion that the contents of the last two tableaux could be easily combined into one. I decided to write this short opera in three tableaux without a break in the music, and I turned to the libretto, with my daughter Sonya, the two of us together writing new lines. The music of *Kashchey* began rapidly to take form in my head,

[1] "Kashchey," writes W. R. S. Ralston in his *Russian Folk-Tales,* "is merely one of the many incarnations of the dark spirit . . . sometimes he is described as altogether serpent-like in form; sometimes he seems to be of a mixed nature, partly human and partly ophidian, but in some stories he is apparently framed after the fashion of a man . . . he is called 'immortal' or 'deathless' because of his superiority to the ordinary laws of existence . . . sometimes his 'death'—that is, the object with which his life is indissolubly connected—does not exist within his body." An example of this latter instance occurs in Stravinski's ballet, *The Firebird,* in which Kashchey's "death" is concealed in an egg. C. V. V.

and toward the end of the summer the first tableau was ready in orchestral score, the second—in rough draft. The composition was acquiring a stamp of individuality, thanks to some new harmonic devices that had heretofore not existed in my repertory as composer. These were the false relations formed by the progression of major thirds, the inner sustained tones and various interrupted and false cadences with turns toward dissonant chords, and also a multitude of passing chords. The rather lengthy scene of the snow-storm I succeeded in plotting almost entirely on the sustained diminished chord of the seventh. The form evolved was connected, continuous, but the play of tonalities and the modulatory scheme, as always with me, were not due to chance. The system of leading motives was in full swing. Here and there, in lyric moments, the form assumed stable character and periodic structure, without, however, possessing full cadences. The vocal parts proved melodious, but the recitatives shaped themselves mostly on an instrumental foundation, in contrast to *Mozart and Salieri.* The orchestra was taken in its usual make-up, the chorus —only behind the scenes. All in all, the mood arrived at was gloomy and bleak with rare flashes of light, and, occasionally, with ill-boding gleams. Only the prince's arioso in the Second Tableau, his duet with the princess in Tableau III and the finale on the words:

O reddening sun!
Freedom, Spring and Love!

were to possess a bright character and thus stand out against the general background of gloom.

With the beginning of autumn I continued working on *Kashchey,* instrumentated its second tableau, and, after some intermission, jotted down and instrumentated the third. Publishing rights for *Kashchey* were granted to Bessel who immediately proceeded in the matter.

Prince Volkonski who had produced my *Sadko* on the Mariinski stage the preceding season, put on also *The Tsar's Bride* during the season of 1901–02. Napravnik conducted willingly, but afterwards surrendered the opera to Fyeliks Blumenfeld. Bol'ska as Marfa; Fride and Markovich as Lyubasha; Morskoy as Lykoff; Syeryebryakoff as Malyuta; Kastorski and Sibiryakoff as

Sobakin, were fine. But Yakovleff as Gryaznoy spoiled it all. This singer, with his voice gone and his tastelessly exaggerated expression, was simply unbearable to me. Yet, whether thanks to his still handsome appearance or owing to his former successes, he contrived to win plaudits from the audience after all. The opera was given without cuts.

During the same season, the Moscow Opera produced my *Maid of Pskov* together with *Vyera Sheloga* at the Grand Theatre. I attended the dress-rehearsal as well as the first performance. Judged as a whole, the performance was good, while Shalyapin was inimitable. *Pskovityanka* was given in its entirety, with the scene in the woods, and then and there I was convinced that this scene is superfluous. The *Prologue* received scant attention, although Mme. Salina as Vyera Sheloga was very good.

In the spring I made a definitive start on *Pan Voyevoda.*

The summer of 1902 we decided to spend abroad. My son Andrey matriculated at the University of Heidelberg for the summer semester, in order to attend old Kuno Fischer's lectures; for this reason Heidelberg was selected as our principal place of residence. There we found a villa; we rented a piano, and I resumed work on *Pan Voyevoda.* In addition to this I had another task. Long since beset by the thought that the orchestration of *The Stone Guest,* done as it had been by me in my youth, in the period preceding *May Night,* was inadequate, I resolved to orchestrate afresh Dargomyzhski's great work. As I had orchestrated Tableau I some two or three years before in spare moments between other work, I now took up the rest, softening here and there the extreme harshness and harmonic follies of the original. Work went well. *Pan Voyevoda* moved, the orchestration of *The Stone Guest* moved, and, in addition, I read proofs of *Kashchey* published by Bessel.

After a two-months' stay in delightful Heidelberg, we left with the advent of the University vacations. We made a trip through Switzerland, visiting this time the Horner-Grath, and via Munich, Dresden and Berlin returned home towards September. In Dresden we were fortunate enough to hear an unabridged performance of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung,* conducted by Schuch. The performance was excellent.

I came back to St. Petersburg with a considerable mass of rough drafts for *Pan Voyevoda* and immediately set out to continue the opera as well as to orchestrate what I had composed.

The post of Director of Imperial Theatres was held by Tyelyakovski [1] *vice* Prince Volkonski who had left it. As early as the spring, as is usually done, the repertory for the season of 1902–03 was decided upon, and *Servilia* was included in it. Early in the autumn choral rehearsals were begun under F. Blumenfeld's direction, as Napravnik had fallen ill. Blumenfeld got things as far as orchestral rehearsals. As I appreciated his labours and realized his desire to conduct my *Servilia* independently and not merely as Napravnik's substitute, I addressed the latter, then already on the mend, with a request that he relinquish my opera in favour of Fyeliks. Napravnik consented with no suggestion that his feelings were offended in any way. In October *Servilia* was given an excellent performance. Mme. V. I. Kooza in the title rôle of Servilia was very fine; Yershoff as Valerius, Syeryebryakoff as Soranus and all the others were fine. The opera had been rehearsed excellently, and the artists, apparently, sang gladly and diligently. Yakovleff alone, as Ægnatius, was impossible, try as he might.

Servilia won a *succès d'estime* at the first performance, and none at all (as usual) in the subscription performances. Given once more to non-subscribers it did not fill the theatre by half and was taken off the boards undeservedly. The next season the Directorate projected it for production in Moscow with the St. Petersburg scenery and all the rest of the local mise-en-scène. During the same winter the Mariinski Theatre produced *Die Götterdämmerung.* Thus the entire cycle of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was in full swing. Also Napravnik's new opera *Francesca da Rimini* [2] was given. In Moscow meanwhile *Kashchey* was produced; for this production I was indebted again to the "Association." It was sung together with *Yolanta,* and, for a private opera company, the performance was not bad. I was pleased with the sustained mood of my opera, and the rôles of the soloists proved quite singable; but the hearers hardly found their bearings among their impres-

[1] Previously Director-General of The Imperial Theatre at Moscow. C. V. V.
[2] Libretto based on Stephen Phillips's tragedy *Paolo and Francesca.* J. A. J.

sions. Wreaths and calls for the author (and there was no lack of them) do not prove anything in themselves, especially in Moscow, where they are fond of me for some reason.

In the midst of work on *Pan Voyevoda* Byel'ski and I pondered intensively the subject of *The Tale of the Invisible City of Kityezh and of the Maiden Fyevroniya.* When the outline had been definitively drawn, V. I. set hand to the libretto and finished it by the summer. It was still spring when I composed Act I in rough draft.

For the summer, after the wedding of my daughter Sonya, who had married V. P. Troyitski, we moved to Krapachookha for the second time. After settling in our summer home, I finished the orchestration of *Pan Voyevoda* (Act II), first of all, and then turned to sketch *Kityezh.* Toward the end of the summer, Act I and both tableaux of Act IV were ready in detailed rough draft and much else was sketched in fragments. On removing to St. Petersburg, I jotted down the first tableau of Act III; then Act II. I took up orchestrating.

The season of 1903–04 was signalized to me by the production of *Pskovityanka* with *Sheloga* at the Mariinski Theatre. Shalyapin was magnificent. Napravnik conducted. The opera was given with the cut indicated by me: the scene in the forest was not performed, whereas the music of the forest, of the Tsar's hunting-party and of the rain-storm, was played as a symphonic tableau before Act III and concluded with the girls' ditty (G-major) behind the lowered curtain. Given thus, the result was good.

Shalyapin won success past all belief; the opera so-so, not what it had had in its first days!

At the Conservatory Theatre, *Saltan* was performed by a private Russian opera company under the direction of the impresario Guidi. However, since the music critic of one of the dailies of St. Petersburg (a person with whom it was undesirable to have any dealings) was its principal, though unofficial director of repertory, I attended neither rehearsals nor performances of *Saltan.* I was told they were quite poor.

The Christmas holidays came. M. P. Byelyayeff, who had not been feeling well for a long time, made up his mind to undergo a serious operation. The operation was performed successfully,

but two days later his heart gave way, and he died in his sixty-eighth year. One can easily imagine what a blow this was for the whole circle whose centre had gone with him. In his detailed last will and testament, after providing for his family, Byelyayeff bequeathed all his wealth to the cause of music; he divided it into funds for the Russian Symphony Concerts; the publishing business and composers' fees; prizes in memory of Glinka; prize-competitions in chamber music, and relief of needy composers. There were some other, minor bequests, besides. As the heads of the directorate of all these funds and his entire music business he had designated three persons: Glazunoff, Lyadoff, and myself, who were duty-bound to select our successors. These funds were so large that only the interest thereon, and even then in part only, was to be expended on the concerts, publishing business, etc; the principal itself was to remain untouched, growing larger and larger in the course of time.

Thus, thanks to Mitrofan Petrovich's unselfish love for music, an institution until then unparalleled and unheard of was founded, which for ever assured Russian music of publishers, concerts and prizes; and at the head of it, for the first time, stood our triumvirate. Still, there is no perfection in this world, and this institution in the very testament of the deceased, already contained certain momentous shortcomings of which I shall speak some time in the future.

Under M. P.'s will, at first the Russian Symphony Concerts were to be limited to three each year. During Lent we announced three concerts. For the opening concert I composed a short orchestral prelude *Nad Mogiloyu* (At the Grave), on obitual themes from the *obikhod* (round of church canticles), with an imitation of the monastic funeral knell which had remained in my memory since my childhood at Tikhvin. This prelude was dedicated to Byelyayeff's memory. The concert opened with it, and I conducted it myself. The prelude was hardly noticed. The other numbers of the concert were conducted by Lyadoff and Glazunoff. At the end my *Easter Overture* was excellently played under Sasha's bâton. Thus we honoured Byelyayeff's memory. The other two concerts were given under the direction of F. Blumenfeld and Cheryepnin.

For the summer we removed to our dear familiar Vyechasha.

During the summer I composed the unfinished second tableau of Act III of the *Tale of Kityezh* and completed the orchestration of the opera. In addition to this I was engaged in reading proof on *Pan Voyevoda,* which was in print at Bessel's and was to appear in orchestral score and other guises toward autumn. On the other hand it was intended to have *Kityezh* done by the Byleyayeff firm, so as not to burden the Bessel house too much.

Prince Tsereteli, who had supplanted Guidi as impresario of the Conservatory Opera Theatre, expressed a desire to open his season with *Pan Voyevoda,* which had been accepted by the Directorate of Imperial Theatres for Moscow this time and not for St. Petersburg. At Tsereteli's opera *Pan Voyevoda* had been properly rehearsed by Suk, without cuts, and was given with Insarova as Marfa. This opera had a succès d'estime at the first performance and audiences small in numbers at the other performances.

In October or November *Boris Godunoff,* in my revision, with Shalyapin in the title rôle, was produced at the Mariinski Theatre. F. Blumenfeld conducted. The opera was given without cuts. However, after several performances, the scene *Near Kromy* [1] was omitted, probably owing to political disturbances which began to break out now here and now there.

I remained inexpressibly pleased with my revision and orchestration of *Boris Godunoff,* heard by me for the first time with a large orchestra. Musorgski's violent admirers frowned a bit, regretting something. . . . But having arranged the new revision of *Boris Godunoff* I had not destroyed its original form, had not painted out the old frescoes for ever. If ever the conclusion is arrived at that the original is better, worthier than my revision,—mine will be discarded, and *Boris Godunoff* will be performed according to the original score.[2]

[1] This is the scene in the last act, depicting the advance of the Pretender, and concluding with the wails of the village idiot. C. V. V.

[2] Rimsky-Korsakoff's emendations of *Boris Godunoff* have offered opportunity for a great deal of discussion. Since 1896, when Rimsky-Korsakoff's version appeared, Musorgski's score has not been obtainable nor has it held the stage. Montagu-Nathan admits that Rimsky seems to have "toned down a good many musical features which would have won acceptance today as having been extraordinarily prophetic." Stasoff was opposed to the alterations. "While admitting Musorgski's technical limitations," writes Rosa Newmarch, "and his tendency to be slovenly in workmanship, he thought it might be better for the world to see this original and inspired composer with all

The opera stock-company of Solodovnikoff's Theatre in Moscow (that is, the former Mamontoff opera) had moved the previous season to the Aquarium Theatre; at Solodovnikoff's Theatre a new association had installed itself under the direction of Kozhevnikoff, Lapitski and others. This association had decided to produce my *Servilia* and I gave them permission to do so, as the Moscow Imperial Theatre did not intend to put it on. Its conductors were the composer Kochetoff and an Italian, Barbini. Although N. R. Kochetoff had not the reputation of being a good or experienced conductor, I selected him in preference to the Italian, when the choice was left to me, because a composer's musicianship was more valuable in my eyes than a fine Italian hand. And I had made no mistake. When I came by invitation to Moscow to the dress-rehearsal I found that the orchestra had been drilled conscientiously, that the tempi were correct and that my music had been properly grasped by the conductor. The soloists and the chorus were not sufficiently good, but that was not the conductor's fault. As for the opera, it was given fairly decently and again

his faults ruthlessly exposed to view than clothed in his right mind with the assistance of Rimsky-Korsakoff. . . . We who loved Musorgski's music in spite of its apparent dishevelment may not unnaturally resent Rimsky-Korsakoff's conscientious grooming of it. But when it actually came to the question of producing the operas, even Stasoff, I am sure, realized the need for practical revisions, without which Musorgski's original scores with all their potential greatness, ran considerable risk of becoming mere archæological curiosities." Arthur Pougin (*Essai historique sur la musique en Russie*) falls in with this theory: "In reality the music of Musorgski only became possible when a friendly, experienced hand had taken the trouble to look it over and carefully correct it." James Huneker writes: "Musorgski would not study the elements of orchestration and one of the penalties he paid was that his friend, Rimsky-Korsakoff, 'edited' *Boris Godunoff* (in 1896, a new edition appeared with changes, purely practical, as Calvocoressi notes, but the orchestration, clumsy as it is, largely remains the work of the composer) and *Khovanshchina* was scored by Rimsky-Korsakoff, and no doubt 'edited,' that is revised, what picture experts call 'restored.'" In his life of Musorgski, Calvocoressi contents himself with this laconic statement: "In 1896 a new edition of *Boris Godunoff* appeared, revised by M. Rimsky-Korsakoff. Certain of the changes that one marks in this have a purely practical end, which is to facilitate the execution; others are only motived by the desire to take away from the isolated aspect of the work, to render it less disconcerting to the public." But Jean Marnold (in *Musique d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui*) screams with rage: "He (Rimsky-Korsakoff) changes the order of the last two tableaux, thus denaturing, at its conclusion, the expressly popular essence and the psychology of the drama. The scene of Boris, with his children is especially mutilated. Rimsky-Korsakoff cuts, at his happiness, one, two, or three measures, as serenely as he cuts fifteen or twenty. At will, he transposes a tone, or a half-tone, makes sharps or flats natural, alters modulations. He even corrects the harmony. During the tableau in the cell of Pimyen, the liturgical Dorian mode is adulterated by a banal D-minor. The interval of the augmented fifth (a favourite device of Musorgski) is frequently the object

with a succès d'estime. Generally speaking, I had long felt disappointed in the Russian private opera impresarios and made up my mind under no circumstances to give my *Kityezh* to a private theatre.

Laroche, once famous among us as a music critic, but in reality a copy of Eduard Hanslick, died after having dragged out a pitiful existence. Grown lazy and slovenly, during his last years, he now lived even without a roof over his head, finding shelter now at Byelyayeff's, now at Lyadoff's and now with others who harboured him out of friendship. Though living among strangers, he nevertheless contrived to annoy them with his caprices and demands to have his whims complied with. In his very last days he received some support from his children and lived in a furnished room. The sympathy shown him by the members of Byelyayeff's circle is incomprehensible to me. Many said "thou" to him, for-

of his equilateral ostracism. He has no more respect for traditional harmony. Nearly every instant Rimsky-Korsakoff changes something for the unique reason that it is his pleasure to do so. From one end of the work to the other he planes, files, polishes, pulls together, retouches, embellishes, makes insipid, or corrupts. Harmony, melody, modulation, tonality, all inspire him to make changes. In comparing the two scores one can hardly believe one's eyes. In the 258 pages of that of Rimsky-Korsakoff there are perhaps not twenty which conform to the original text."

Musorgski's orchestral score of Boris lies (or did before the revolution) buried in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg. It does not appear that any one has yet been able to examine this. In 1874, however, Saint-Saëns brought a piano and vocal score from Russia and yet another example of this score seems to have found its way to Paris. These have been semi-available for examination, but it was not until April, 1922 that Robert Godet published his study, *Les deux Boris,* in *La Revue Musicale,* giving comparative examples from the two scores. The evidence is deadly. "The difference in the two versions does not lie," Godet points out, "in slight transpositions and casual retouching: they attest, on the contrary, to the flagrant and persistent antagonism of the two mentalities. It appears difficult, indeed, after a first inspection of the documents, not to become indignant over the sacrilege, to cry, one is never betrayed save by one's friends! The more one examines the two versions, however, the more one is inclined to modify this excessive impression. Translated into the language of good sense one finishes by summing the situation up in this wise: let us not speak of betrayal, rather let us call it simply incompatibility of character." In a number of *The Sackbut,* published almost simultaneously in London, Edwin Evans discusses the question, suggesting that if a revision seems necessary it should be made in an advanced manner, by some one like Stravinski, rather than in a conservative or traditional manner. He points out that because Musorgski wrote a good many pages which the musicians of his time did not understand, it has always been held that he did this through lack of knowledge, rather than intentionally. He modulated abruptly without a formal reason. He interrupted himself. He contradicted himself. Moved by compulsion, he passed rapidly, without transitional passages, from one idea to another. It is these possibly intentional manifestations of original genius that Rimsky-Korsakoff has taken it upon himself to correct. C. V. V.

getting the past. Fortunate that his verdicts had not been enforced and his prophecies never came true. His activity was mere grimace and gesticulation, lies and paradoxes, exactly like the activity of his Viennese prototype.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1905–06

Disturbances among student-youth. Performance of *Kashchey* in St. Petersburg. Text-book of Instrumentation. *Pan Voyevoda* in Moscow. Aryenski's death. Affairs at the Conservatory. Revival of *Snyegoorochka*. Concerts: Ziloti, Russian Symphony and Russian Musical Society. Additions to the score of *Boris Godunoff*. Musorgski's *Wedding*. Summer of 1906.

The courses at the Conservatory went on more or less successfully until the Christmas holidays. However, before the beginning of the Christmas intermission, a certain state of excitement began to be noticeable among the pupils who reacted toward the disturbances going on in the University. Then came January 9th, and political ferment seized all St. Petersburg. The Conservatory, too, was affected; its students were in turmoil. Meetings were called. The cowardly and tactless Bernhard began to interfere. The Directorate of the Russian Musical Society also began to meddle. Special meetings of the Art Council and of the Directorate became the order of the day. I was chosen a member of the Committee for adjusting differences with agitated pupils. All sorts of measures were recommended: to expel the ringleader, to quarter the police in the Conservatory, to close the Conservatory entirely. The rights of the pupils had to be championed. Disputes and wrangling grew more and more violent. If one were to believe the conservatives among the professors and the Directorate of the St. Petersburg Branch, I myself was possibly the very head of the revolutionary movement among the student-youth. Bernhard behaved in the most tactless fashion imaginable. In the daily *Roos'* (Russia) I made public a letter [1] in which I took the Directorate to task for not understanding the pupils, and argued that the existence of the Directorate of the St. Petersburg

[1] cf. Appendix VI.

Branch was unnecessary, as well as that self-government was desirable. At the meeting of the Art Council Bernhard devoted himself to examining and condemning my letter. Counter-arguments were uttered, and he broke up the meeting. Then a considerable group of professors, together with me, suggested in a letter that he leave the Conservatory. The result of it all was that the Conservatory was closed, more than a hundred pupils were expelled, Bernhard left, and I was dismissed from the ranks of professors of the Conservatory by the chief Directorate, without previous consultation with the Art Council. On receiving notice of this dismissal I wrote a letter [1] about it to the newspaper *Roos'* and simultaneously resigned my honorary membership in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Musical Society. Then something incredible occurred. From St. Petersburg, Moscow and every corner of Russia, there came flying to me from every variety of institutions and all sorts of people, both connected with music and having no connection with music, addresses and letters bearing expressions of sympathy for me and indignation at the Directorate of the Russian Musical Society. Deputations from societies and corporations, as well as private individuals kept coming to me with declarations to the same effect. Articles discussing my case began to appear in all the papers; the Directorate was trampled in the mud and had a very difficult time of it. Some of its members left it, men like Persiani and Alyeksandr Sergeyevich Tañeyeff.[2] To cap it all, the students set their minds on giving, at Mme. Kommissarzhevskaya's Theatre, an operatic performance consisting of my *Kashchey* and concert numbers. *Kashchey* had been rehearsed very finely under Glazunoff's direction. At the conclusion of *Kashchey* something unprecedented took place: I was called before the curtain, addresses from various societies and unions were read to me, and inflammatory speeches were delivered. The din and hubbub after each address and each speech were indescribable. The police ordered the iron curtain to be lowered and thereby stopped further excitement. The concert portion did not materialize.

Such exaggeration of my services and my quasi-extraordinary courage may be explained only by the excitement of Russian society as a whole, which desired to express, in the form of an address to

[1] Cf. Appendix VII.

[2] (1850–1918?), an uncle of the more famous Tañeyeff. J. A. J.

me, the pent-up indignation against the general régime. Realizing this as I did, I had not the emotion that satisfies ambition. I waited only to see how soon it would end. But it did not end soon, it dragged on for two whole months. My position was unbearable and absurd. The police issued orders forbidding the performance of my compositions in St. Petersburg. Some of the crotchety provincial governors also issued similar orders in their domains. On this basis there was also forbidden the third Russian Symphony Concert, the program of which included the Overture to my *Pskovityanka*. Toward the summer the force of this absurd prohibition began to weaken little by little, and, owing to my being in fashion, my compositions came to figure with considerable frequency on the summer programs of out-of-town orchestras. Only in the provinces the zealous martinets persisted in considering them revolutionary for some time longer.

The classes did not resume at the Conservatory. Glazunoff and Lyadoff sent in their resignations. My other colleagues, however, after talking and making some little noise, remained, every one, save (for reasons unknown) Vyerzhbilovich, Mme. Esipova (who went abroad) and F. Blumenfeld, who grasped this favourable moment to quit the Conservatory, a step he had been aching to take in any event. On the other hand, at the private meetings, held at Sasha Glazunoff's home during these troublous days, it was decided, by an imposing number of the instructors, to elect Glazunoff director of a self-governing conservatory. But there the matter rested.

The events of the spring of 1905 at the Conservatory and my own story have been described very briefly; but the materials —articles, letters to editors, the official message to me, containing my dismissal—I have in complete order. Whoever wishes may avail himself of that material; as for me, I have no desire to enter upon a detailed description of this long pause in my musical life.

For the summer of 1905 we moved again to Vyechasha. My son Andrey, suffering from rheumatism, had gone abroad with his mother and was taking the cure at Nauheim, whence they returned to Vyechasha only at the end of the summer. Fortunately, the cure brought the desired benefit, but another visit to Nauheim the following year was planned in order to have Andrey's health

completely restored. Quite upset by the incident at the Conservatory, I could not turn to anything for a long time. After trying my hand at an article containing an analysis of my *Snyegoorochka,* I finally turned to carrying out a thought of long standing—to write a text-book of orchestration with illustrations culled exclusively from my own compositions. This labour consumed the entire summer. In addition to this, the orchestral score of the *Tale of Kityezh* was prepared for printing, and much had to be copied clean and polished a bit. This time publication had been undertaken by Byelyayeff's firm. I shall also mention re-writing the duet *Gorny Klyooch* (The Mountain Spring) as a vocal trio, as well as orchestrating it, together with two duets and the song *The Nymph.*

After my return to St. Petersburg, all my time was spent in hunting up illustrations for my manual of orchestration, and in evolving the form of the manual itself. The Conservatory was closed. My pupils studied under me at my house.

Early in the autumn I was called to Moscow to attend the production of *Pan Voyevoda* at the Grand Theatre. The talented Rakhmaninoff conducted. The opera proved to have been well rehearsed, but some of the artists were rather weak, for instance Mme. Polozova, the Marya, and Pyetroff—the Voyevoda. Orchestra and choruses went splendidly. I was pleased with the sound of the opera both in voices and orchestra. What had sounded fair at the private opera house, gained manifold with a large orchestra. The whole orchestration had hit the mark squarely, and the voices sounded beautiful. The beginning of the opera, the nocturne, the scene of fortune-telling, the Mazurka, the Krakovyak, the Polonaise pianissimo during the scene of Yadviga with Pan Dzyuba, left nothing to be desired. The song of the dying swan, which had taken very well at St. Petersburg, came out more pallid here at Polozova's hands, while Pyetroff's execution of the Pan's aria was colourless.

The time of the production of *Pan Voyevoda* at Moscow was riotous. A few days before the first performance a strike of printing shops broke out. Except for the theatre signboards, no advertisements whatever could appear, and the first performance did not draw a full house by half. There was nevertheless a succès d'estime; but the ever-growing frequency of the strikes, the political disturbances and finally the December uprising in Moscow led to

the disappearance of my opera from the repertory after several performances. Tyelyakovski was present at the first performance. On learning from Rakhmaninoff that I had *The Tale of Kityezh* completed, he expressed a desire to produce it in St. Petersburg the following season. I told him that henceforth I did not intend to submit my operas to the Directorate; let the Directorate itself select whichever it wished of my published operas. Still, owing to the fact that Tyelyakovski took an interest in my *Tale of Kityezh* I should present him with an autographed copy of it upon its publication; but whether my opera were produced or not, that would rest with him: if he wished to put it on—I should be pleased, if he decided not to do so—I should take no steps to remind him.

After listening to my *Sadko* at Solodovnikoff's Theatre in a wretched performance under Pagani's direction, I returned to St. Petersburg.

In the autumn, death carried off A. S. Aryenski. A former pupil of mine, upon being graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he had become professor at the Moscow Conservatory and had lived in Moscow a number of years. According to all testimony, his life had run a dissipated course between wine and card-playing, yet his activity as composer was most fertile. At one time he had been the victim of a nervous ailment, which had, however, evidently left no lasting effect. Having left the staff of professors of the Moscow Conservatory in the Nineties, he removed to St. Petersburg and for some time was director of the Court Chapel, succeeding Balakireff. At this post, too, the same mode of life continued, though on a reduced scale. On leaving the Chapel, after Count A. D. Sheryemetyeff had been appointed head of the Chapel, Aryenski found himself in an enviable position: listed as some privy-commission functionary in the Ministry of the Court, Aryenski drew a pension of some six thousand rubles, and was absolutely free to work at his composing. He did work much at composition, but that is just where he began to burn the candle at both ends. Revels, card-playing, health undermined by this mode of living, galloping consumption as the final result, dying at Nice and death at last in Finland. Upon settling in St. Petersburg, Aryenski had always been on friendly terms with Byelyayeff's circle, but had kept aloof, all by himself, as a com-

poser, recalling Chaykovski in this respect. By the nature of his talent and his tastes as composer he was the closest approximation to A. G. Rubinstein, but he was inferior in the force of talent for composition, though in instrumentation, as the child of more modern times, he outdistanced A. G. In his youth Aryenski had not escaped entirely my own influence, later he fell under Chaykovski's influence. He will be soon forgotten.

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The all-Russian strike broke out. October 17th came with the street-demonstration of the 18th. A temporary unlimited freedom of the press came, then the withdrawal of liberties, repressions, the Moscow uprising, again repressions, etc. Work on my manual, too, flagged for some reason or other. Nevertheless, in the midst of all these disturbances, provisional rules for the Conservatory of a somewhat self-governing character were promulgated. The Art Council was granted the right to engage professors independently of the St. Petersburg Directorate and to elect from their own ranks a Director for a definite term of years. On the basis of these new principles, the Council immediately invited me and all the other professors who had left the Conservatory because of me, to come back into their midst. At our first general meeting Glazunoff was unanimously elected Director. The expelled students were re-instated. But there was no way of resuming studies, as the students' meeting that had been called had passed a resolution forbidding it, owing to the non-resumption of studies in other higher educational institutions. It was decided to permit only graduation-examinations in May. My instruction of the pupils continued at my house. The meetings of the Art Council were stormy to the point of indecency. Some advocated the opening of classes, slandering the student body in every possible way, and quarrelling with Glazunoff, who clung to the resolution passed at the meeting; others of his former partisans, turned their backs on him under the influence of the reaction which had overwhelmed a part of society. The position of Glazunoff, who was worshipped by the students, was a difficult one. The conservative group of instructors snarled at him like dogs, at every meeting. At one of these, I lost my temper and left the meeting, saying that I could stay at the Conservatory no longer. Some of them ran after me, begged me, tried to calm me. I wrote a

letter of explanation to the Art Council, confessing that I should not have flown into a passion, but stating the motives that had incensed me. Having made up my mind to remain with the Conservatory until summer, I had in view to leave it by the following autumn, the more so as the St. Petersburg Directorate which had at first shrunk to zero, began to show signs of life by putting all manner of obstacles on the money side in the way of Glazunoff's endeavours. I spoke to Glazunoff of my intention to leave, urging him, too, to leave the Conservatory that had become unbearable. He was in despair, saw in my departure seeds of further disorders, and would not consent to go himself, expecting still to be of use to the institution. The month of May came and with it the time of examinations. Glazunoff conducted the examinations zealously and energetically. The minds of the students, too, had calmed somewhat with the opening of the examinations, and the academic year came to a safe close. Out of pity for beloved Sasha as well as for my numerous pupils, I decided to delay my leaving until autumn, because Glazunoff's intentions were of the best, and it came hard to frustrate his plans.

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During the latter half of the season at the Mariinski Theatre *Snyegoorochka* was revived and given eleven times under the direction of F. Blumenfeld. Notwithstanding the disturbed times, the performances drew good houses. *Sadko* had also been projected, but it did not materialize and was postponed till the next season. *The Tsar's Bride,* produced early in the spring, apparently had been stricken from the repertory, and, in the spring, rehearsals of *The Tale of the City of Kityezh* began at the instance of Tyelyakovski, who had received from me a copy of the opera as a present.

At the Ziloti Concerts my Symphony in C-major was given—its first performance not under my direction. Heretofore, conductors apparently had been afraid of it, probably because of its Scherzo in ¾. In reality the Symphony did not prove too difficult, and Ziloti conducted it successfully. Glazunoff's *Ey ookhñem* (Heave-ho!) and my *Doobinooshka* (the little cudgel),[1] composed under the influence or rather on the occasion of the revolutionary dis-

[1] This folksong, possibly even better known than *Ey ookhñem,* has always been *the* revolutionary song of Russia, and its singing was forbidden for years. J. A. J.

turbances, were played at another concert. Exactly as much as Glazunoff's piece proved magnificent, just so much did my *Doobinooshka* prove short and insignificant, even though sufficiently noisy.

The prohibition of its third concert in the spring of the previous year affected the pecuniary affairs of the Russian Symphony Concerts, and this season it was found necessary to limit the concerts to two only, under the direction of Blumenfeld and Cheryepnin. In memory of Musorgski, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his death, several of his pieces were performed (and all in my orchestration!).

The concerts of the Russian Musical Society dragged on their sad existence. The shadow that had fallen on this organization as a result of the previous spring, obfuscated these concerts, particularly at the beginning of the season. Foreign conductors refused to come, our own also fought shy. The young conductor Volchok did not attract any audiences. The concerts were saved by Auer and the German Beidler, who came to conduct two of them.

My own musical life ran somehow barrenly, owing to my feeling out of sorts and fatigued. With Byel'ski we turned over certain operatic subjects in our minds, namely *Styeñka Razin*—a highwayman's song, and *Heaven and Earth.* V. I. Byel'ski even jotted down the libretto, but the musical ideas which infrequently came into my head were short and fragmentary. The manual of orchestration, too, had come to a standstill. On the one hand its form would not take shape, while on the other hand I wished to wait for the production of *Kityezh,* in order to draw some of my illustrations from that source.

Nevertheless, in the spring I took up and finished another piece of work on Musorgski's compositions. The reproaches which I had had occasion to hear more than once for having omitted some pages of *Boris Godunoff* when revising it, spurned me to turn once more to that composition; and, after subjecting the omitted portions to revision and orchestration, to prepare them for publication as a supplement to the orchestral score. In this wise I orchestrated Pimyen's story of the Tsars Ivan and Fyodor, the story "about popiñka" (parrot), "the carillon clock," the scene of the False Dmitri with Rangoni at the fountain, and the False Dmitri's soliloquy after the Polonaise.

The turn had come even of the famous *Zhenit'ba* (Wedding). By agreement with Stasoff, who had until then concealed this manuscript from curious eyes, within the walls of the Imperial Public Library, *The Wedding* was performed one fine evening at my house by Sigizmund Blumenfeld, my daughter Sonya, the tenor Sandoolyenko and the young Goori Stravinski. Nadyezhda Nikolayevna was at the piano. Dragged into the light of day, this composition struck us all by its wit, combined with a certain preconceived unmusicalness. Having thought over and deliberated a course of action, I decided (to V. V. Stasoff's profound delight) to hand this composition over to Bessel for publication, after having first looked it over and made the necessary corrections and simplifications, with a view to orchestrating [1] it at some time in the future for a stage production.

In addition to the above-mentioned occasion of the performance of *The Wedding* at our house, close friends gathered at our house on every other Wednesday, and we had music, principally vocal. New compositions were looked over and sung. The gatherings were often rather numerous. Once Glazunoff played his Eighth Symphony. Quite frequently F. Blumenfeld came and Mme. N. I. Zabyela, who was then already an artist of the Mariinski Theatre. Her husband, the painter Vrubel', for more than two years a victim of a mental disease, had in addition completely lost his eyesight; he was then in a hospital, without any hope of recovery. Until then his mental malady had run a course with intervals of lucidity, when he would take up work again. With the loss of eyesight, work became impossible even in moments of mental tranquility. A terrible situation!

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I have already said that it was necessary for my son Andrey to make another trip to Nauheim for the complete recovery of his health. Accordingly, at the beginning of May, he went abroad with his mother. After passing his final examinations, our son Volodya became free, having graduated from the University that year. We decided to spend the whole summer abroad. The three of us, Volodya, Nadya and I left early in June, via Vienna, for Riva on Lago di Garda, whither also Nadyezhda Nikolayevna

[1] The first 12 pages of the orchestral score, in clean copy, have been preserved among N. A.'s papers. Editor's note. (Mme. R. K.)

was to come with Andrey as soon as his cure had been completed. After their arrival we spent some five weeks at delightful Riva. I was busy orchestrating my songs *Son v lyetñuyu noch'* (A Midsummer Night's Dream) and *Anchar;* I also orchestrated three songs of Musorgski; composed a development and continuation with coda for my too brief *Doobinooshk*a and developed a bit the conclusion of *Kashchey* (which had not satisfied me) by adding a chorus behind the scenes. But the ideas of the mystery *Earth and Heaven* did not pull together; nor did *Styeñka Razin* get anywhere. . . . The thought whether it were not high time to write finis to my career as composer [1] (a thought that had haunted me since I had finished *The Tale of Kityezh*) did not leave me as well. The news from Russia nursed my restless frame of mind, but I decided not to leave the Conservatory, unless circumstances impelled me to take that step, the more so as the letters of Glazunoff, who had taken up the orchestration of his Eighth Symphony, gave me consolation. I resolved not to part with him and Anatoli; as for the matter of composing let come what might. In any event I had no desire to get into the stupid position of a "singer who has lost his voice." *Qui vivra verra.*

After we had lived quietly at Riva nearly five weeks, we made a trip to Italy and, having visited Milan, Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Bologna and Venice, returned to dear Riva for two more weeks. Tomorrow we leave Riva and go to Russia via Munich and Vienna.

The Chronicle of my Musical Life has been brought to its close. It is without order, is unequally detailed throughout, it is written in wretched style, often even extremely dry; but, in compensation, it contains *nothing but the truth,* and this will lend it interest.

On my arrival in St. Petersburg, perhaps, my long yearned for idea—of writing a diary—will be realized. Whether the idea will last long—who knows? . . .

N. Rimsky-Korsakoff.

Riva sul lago di Garda,
August 22 of the old style, 1906.

[1] Rimsky-Korsakoff was yet to write *Le Coq d'Or!* C. V. V.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Dear Nikolay Andreyevich:

I had not intended writing, but was so overjoyed on finding all you want, that I was seized with the desire to let you know it; besides, while rummaging in the papers I found sketches, which may perhaps be of use to you,—hence it would not be a bad idea for you when you have a free moment, about 10 or 11 in the morning, to drop in on me.

Yours,
L. Shestakova.

Sept. 8, 1895.

M. A. Balakireff made his first trip to Prague in 1866, in the month of June, on my requesting him to make a stage-production of *Ruslan* there. However, he returned toward the end of July, without having accomplished this errand. In September of the same year, having obtained a letter of introduction from V. I. Lamanski [1] to Rüger, in Prague, I went there on the 16th, and with the latter's assistance, the question of producing *Ruslan* was settled in a few hours. Taking with him all the sketches of scenery, costumes, and accessories, made by Gornostayeff at my request, M. A. Balakireff went to Prague a second time on December 21, of that year, and there applied himself to the production of *Ruslan* and *A Life for the Tsar*. It was our desire that *Ruslan* should be given on the stage for the first time on February 3, the anniversary of my brother's death; but for some reason that could not be done, and the première of *Ruslan* in Prague took place on February 4, 1867, with M. A. Balakireff conducting.

THIRD NOTE OF L. SHESTAKOVA

Stellovski did not allow me to publish the orchestral score of *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. After Stellovski's death, I arranged with his heirs the matter of publishing *Ruslan,* and entrusted to V. N. Engelhardt all negotiations with Röder in Leipzic concerning the publication of that score. The negotiations began in the summer of 1876, and in November of the same year Balakireff, Rimsky-Korsakoff and Lyadoff engaged in preparing them for print and usually brought me whatever they had made ready. What they had set right I used to send to Leipzic, and I handed them the proofs re-

[1] Famous scholar (Slavic philology) and prominent leader of Slavophils. J. A. J.

ceived from Leipzic. I got the first published copy of the orchestral score of *Ruslan* from Leipzic on November 10, 1878, and the very next day, November 11, I invited the co-workers and "Bach" [1] for the evening. All of us together made a joyous time of it, drank, at supper, a glass to my brother's memory, and I thanked them all, heartily congratulating them upon bringing the cherished task to completion. In 1880, by agreement with G. Hake, Stellovski published the orchestral score of *A Life for the Tsar* in St. Petersburg.

[1] V. V. Stasoff. J. A. J.

APPENDIX II

FIVE SUBSCRIPTION CONCERTS OF THE FREE MUSIC SCHOOL

I

OCTOBER 26, 1869, AT 1:30 P. M., IN THE HALL OF THE CLUB OF THE NOBILITY

I. *Eine Faust Ouvertüre.* — Rich. Wagner.

II. Scene at the Church, Excerpt from the music to *Faust,* for solo, chorus and orchestra (first time). The part of Gretchen will be sung by Mme. Y. F. Platonova. The part of the Evil Spirit by G. I. Kondratyeff. — Schumann.

III. Fantasy for the pianoforte with orchestra on themes from *Ruines d'Athènes* of Beethoven (first time). — Liszt.

IV. *1000 Years,* a musical tableau for orchestra. — Balakireff.

V. Excerpts from the opera *Oberon;* a) Chorus of Elves; b) Chorus of the Khalif's courtiers. — Weber.

VI. Fifth Symphony in C-minor, for orchestra. — Beethoven.

II

NOVEMBER 2, 1869, AT 1:30 P. M., IN THE HALL OF THE CLUB OF THE NOBILITY

I. Overture to the opera *Iphigenia in Aulis* with concert-ending by Rich. Wagner. — Gluck.

II. Concerto for the cello with orchestra, in A-minor (first time). The cello part will be played by K. Y. Davydoff. — Schumann.

III. *Ivan Grozny,* a musico-characteristic picture for orchestra (first time). — Ant. Rubinstein.

IV. Songs with the accompaniment of the piano, sung by Mme. A. A. Khvostova.
  a) *Lied der Braut.* — Schumann.
  b) *Hebrew Song: I sleep, but my watchful heart is not asleep.* — Rimsky-Korsakoff.
  c) Laura's song from the opera *The Stone Guest.* — Dargomyzhski.

V. Excerpts from the Monodrama (drama for one personage) *Lélio:*
  a) The Harp of Æolus (orchestra); b) Fantasy on Shakespeare's *Tempest* (chorus and orchestra). — Berlioz.

VI. Overture to Shakespeare's drama *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* — Mendelssohn.

III

November 16, 1869, at 1:30 p. m., in the Hall of the Club of the Nobility

I. Excerpts from the Oratorio *Legende von der heiligen Elisabeth* (first time).
  a) Introduction (orchestra); b) March and chorus of Crusaders (orchestra and chorus); c) Death of St. Elizabeth (solo and chorus). Solo part will be sung by Mme. Y. F. Platonova. — Liszt.

II. Episode from the *bylina Sadko,* musical tableau for orchestra. — Rimsky-Korsakoff.

III. Third Concerto (on Danish themes) in E flat major, for piano and orchestra. The piano part played by F. O. Leschetizky. — Litolff.

IV. First Symphony in B flat major, for orchestra. — Schumann.

IV

November 30, 1869, at 1:30 p. m., in the Hall of the Club of the Nobility

I. Overture to the tragedy *Coriolanus.* — Beethoven.

II. First Concerto (E flat major) for piano and orchestra. — Liszt.
The piano part will be played by N. G. Rubinstein.

III. Excerpts from the unfinished fairy comic opera *Rogdana.*

a) Chorus of Dervishes; b) Chorus of Rogdana's fairy maidens. — Dargomyzhski.

IV. Piano-pieces.
- a) Berceuse — Laskovski.
- b) Romance — Chaykovski.
- c) Oriental Fantasy *Islamey* — Balakireff.

Played by N. G. Rubinstein.

V. Symphony in C-major, for orchestra. — Fr. Schubert.

V

March 2, 1870, at 1:30 p. m., in the Hall of the Club of the Nobility

I. Two episodes from the music to Lenau's *Faust* for orchestra.
a) Nocturnal procession; b) Waltz of Mephistopheles. — Liszt.

II. Introduction to the opera *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (without cuts). — Glinka.
The part of Bayan will be sung by V. M. Vasilyeff.

III. Ninth Symphony, for orchestra, chorus and solos.
The solo parts will be sung by: Mmes. Y. F. Platonova, Y. A. Lavrovskaya; Messrs. V. M. Vasilyeff, I. A. Myel'nikoff. — Beethoven.

APPENDIX III

FEBRUARY 3, 1876, AT 8 P. M., IN THE HALL OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

I. Overture to the tragedy *Coriolanus.* — Beethoven.

II. Excerpts from the Mass in B-minor.
a) Kyrie eleison (first time); b) Aria *Qui sedes*—sung by M. D. Kamyenskaya; c) Chorus *Crucifixus;* d) Chorus *Dona nobis* (first time). — Bach.

III. Excerpts from the Oratorio *Samson:* a) Chorus of Israelites: "Then round about the starry throne"; b) Air of Dalila with chorus of Virgins: "With plaintive notes and am'rous moan," sung by Mme. O. A. Skal'kovskaya; c) Chorus of Israelites: "Hear, Jacob's God, Jehovah, hear!"; d) Air and chorus of Philistines: "Great Dagon has subdued our foe," solo sung by O. A. Skal'kovskaya; e) Air and chorus of Israelites: "Weep, Israel," solo sung by M. D. Kamyenskaya; f) Recitative and Chorus of Israelites: "Glorious hero"; g) Closing chorus "Let their celestial concerts all unite." — Handel.

APPENDIX IV

MARCH 23, 1876, AT 8 P. M., IN THE HALL OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

I. Overture to the tragedy *King Lear*.	Balakireff.
II. Chorus from the last act of the Opera *Prince Igor* (first time).	Borodin.
III. Romanza from Act III of the Opera *William Ratcliff*, will be sung by Mme. A. N. Molas.	Cui.
IV. Piano solo,—will be played by	D. I. Klimoff.
V. Two choruses from the unfinished fairy comic opera *Rogdana:* a) Oriental chorus of hermits; b) chorus of Princess Rogdana's maidens. (Orchestrated by Rimsky-Korsakoff).	Dargomyzhski.
VI. Narrative from Act IV of the Opera *Boris Godunoff*, will be sung by V. I. Vasilyeff.	Musorgski.
VII. Songs: a) On the Hills of Gruzia.	Rimsky-Korsakoff.
b) The Orphan.	Musorgski.
c) Come to Me.	Balakireff.
Sung by Mme. A. N. Molas.	
VIII. Chorus "Tatar Song."	Cui.
IX. *Kamarinskaya*, fantasy for orchestra.	Glinka.

APPENDIX V

EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE DE 1889
AUDITIONS MUSICALES
PALAIS DU TROCADERO

LE SAMEDI 22 JUIN A 2 HEURES PRECISES

PREMIER CONCERT RUSSE

Cent Musiciens sous la Direction de

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW

PROGRAMME

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

I. Ouverture de Rousslan et Ludmilla.	Glinka.
II. Dans les steppes de l'Asie centrale, tableau musical.	Borodine.
III. Allegro du 1-er concerto de piano avec orchestre. Exécuté par M. Lavrow.	Tschaikowsky.
IV. Antar, 2-e symphonie, d'après un conte arabe.	Rimsky-Korsakow.

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

V. Ouverture sur des thêmes russes.	Balakirew.
VI. Marche solennelle.	Cui.
VII. a) Impromptu.	Cui.
b) Intermezzo en si b. majeur.	Liadow.
c) Prélude en si mineur.	"
d) Novellette en ut majeur. Exécutés par M. Lavrow.	"
VIII. Fantaisie sur des airs Finnois.	Dargomijski.
IX. Stenka Razine, poème symphonique, exécuté sous la direction de l'auteur.	Glazounow.

PALAIS DU TROCADERO
AUDITIONS MUSICALES

LE SAMEDI 29 JUIN A 2 HEURES PRECISES

DEUXIEME CONCERT RUSSE

Cent Musiciens sous la Direction de

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW

PREMIÈRE PARTIE

I. 2-e symphonie en fa dièse mineur sous la direction de l'auteur. — Glazounow.
   I. Andante maestoso. Allegro.
   II. Andante.
   III. Allegro vivace.
   IV. Intrada. Andantino sostenuto. Finale-Allegro.

II. Concerto pour piano et orchestre. — Rimsky-Korsakow.
   Exécuté par M. Lavrow.

III. Kamarinskaya, Fantaisie sur les thêmes russes. — Glinka.

DEUXIÈME PARTIE

IV. a) Marche Polovtsienne.
   b) Danses Polovtsiennes.
   (de l'opéra le Prince Igor.) — Borodine.

(Les Polovtsi étaient une peuplade sauvage de race Turque en Russie au XII-e siècle).

V. Une nuit sur le Mont-Chauve, tableau musical. — Moussorgsky.

VI. a) Mazurka en sol bémol majeur. — Balakirew.
   b) Barcarolle. — Tschaikowski.
   c) Etude en la majeur. — Blumenfeld.
   Exécutés par M. Lavrow.

VII. 1-er Scherzo pour orchestre. — Liadow.

VIII. Capriccio Espagnol. — Rimsky-Korsakow.

APPENDIX VI

a) OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY ROOS'

DEAR SIR:

In No. 52 of your esteemed daily there appeared a brief statement of the thoughts expressed by me at the meeting of the Art Council of the Conservatory on February 24,—thoughts concerning the desirability of broader powers for the Art Council. Finding that this news item is not sufficiently complete, I hasten to state it in greater detail. Briefly speaking, I had expressed myself: 1) that the local Directorate of the Imperial Russian Musical Society, which had given life to the Conservatory in the Sixties, had given it its material support during many years and had obtained its constitution and by-laws for it,—had, in subsequent years, and because of that very constitution, proved (in its personnel) to be a casual element and only indirectly in touch with musical art; 2) that for the Conservatory, which at this moment appears to me a grown-up and mature institution, there has grown ripe the need of changes in the constitution, with a view to giving the Conservatory full autonomy (under which the local Directorate will become a superfluous bureaucratic court of resort between the Conservatory and the Directorate-in-chief of the Imperial Russian Musical Society) as well as with a view to establishing correct relations between the Director of the Conservatory and the Art Council by granting this latter greater independence and broader powers of action. I suggest that the Conservatory insist upon this, in the hope that the Directorate of the local branch will lend it assistance instead of resistance. In conclusion I expressed the idea that the Art Council would hardly refuse greater autonomy and broader powers of action, and the Directorate—shrink from the more frequent co-operation of such an institution as the Art Council. May the two jointly, in the nearest future, work out a suitable statement which they will submit to the Directorate of the local branch and the Directorate-in-chief of the Imperial Russian Musical Society.

N. RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF.

b) AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE ST. PETERSBURG CONSERVATORY

MY DEAR AVGUST RUDOL'FOVICH:

The movement, which assumed the form of a strike of the students of the Higher Educational Institutions, has affected also the St. Petersburg Conservatory, which undoubtedly belongs with them in its problem of musical education. From the very outset of this agitation, together with several other of my colleagues, I made efforts by word and deed, to pacify this movement and calm the participants' minds. When, in spite of this, the movement had spread, the Conservatory was temporarily closed, till February 28. At the Art Council meeting of February 24, I was one of the twenty-seven instructors who cast their votes in favour of closing the Conservatory until September 1. Nevertheless, by order of the Directorate of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Imperial Musical Society, the Conservatory proved only temporarily closed until March 15. Because of anticipated disorders that might break out with the re-opening of the Conservatory, disorders amid which the normal course is unthinkable, I insisted once more that the period in which the Conservatory remain closed be prolonged until September 1, as had been decided by the majority of votes in the Art Council. Now that the strike of Higher Educational Institutions is a reality which the professors and the Government have to face, the Conservatory, guided by the Directorate of the Musical Society, has taken a stand apart from all other educational institutions and, contrary to the example of all the others (in spite of the resolution of the Art Council), has decided to re-open its classes beginning March 16th. The consequences foreseen have become a reality: today, after 11 A. M. the Conservatory found itself surrounded by a cordon of mounted and foot police who scattered those pupils vainly desiring to enter the building. Admission into the Conservatory was by tickets distributed beforehand to pupils who wished to go on with studies; in this category of pupils only an insignificant number put in an appearance (some ten in all). Thus it has been today, so it will be tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, etc. The striking pupils have been left to the tender mercies of the police; while those who have not gone on strike are guarded by the same police. Is a regular course of instruction possible under such conditions? I find it impossible; many other instructors find it so likewise. The Conservatory authorities—the Director, the Inspectors, the Directorate of the Musical Society—view it differently, without being disconcerted by things that make the Government itself stop to think. Is any progress in the cause of artistic music possible at an institution where the resolutions of the Art Council have no value; at an institution where, under its Constitu-

tion, the musical artists are subordinated to the Directorate, that is, to a circle of amateur-dilettantes; at an institution where, under the same constitution, the Director is not elected for a term, but represents an irremovable element; at an institution, finally, that is utterly indifferent to the fate of its pupils in questions of education? All the above regulations of the Constitution as well as the acts of the Conservatory administration I find inopportune, anti-artistic and harsh from the moral point of view, and I deem it my duty to express my protest.

N. Rimsky-Korsakoff.

St. Petersburg, March 16.

APPENDIX VII

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTORATE OF THE ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH OF THE IMPERIAL RUSSIAN MUSICAL SOCIETY

In accordance with the Directorate's resolution adopted at a meeting on March 19, 1905, and officially communicated to me, I have been under Art. 5, §14 of the Constitution of the Conservatory and §55 of the Constitution of the Russian Imperial Musical Society, dismissed from the duties of professor at the Conservatory, because I had

> "publicly, in sharp manner and with perversion of facts expressed a protest against the Directorate's actions aiming at restoring the interrupted studies at the Conservatory; and this manifestly hinders the Directorate's efforts to bring tranquility and the even tenor of educational life into the Conservatory";

and hence the Directorate

> "considers impossible my further activity as professor."

If in my letter to the Director of the Conservatory reference has been made to the twenty-seven votes cast in favour of closing the Conservatory until that length of time, while the majority favoured closing the Conservatory "until passions shall have calmed,"—an inexactness of that nature on my part cannot manifestly alter the sense of my letter, while the phrase "passions shall have calmed" points to a space of time possibly still more remote than September 1. For it cannot be asserted that on March 15 the calming of passions occurred. Wherefore I request the Directorate to state what facts have suffered perversion on my part. Without that, the hint (undeserved by me) of my alleged bad faith will prove a not altogether honourable procedure on the Directorate's part. As for the act of dismissing me over the heads of the Art Council, this but proves once more that I am right in thinking that it is from the Constitution that the abnormality in the relations between the Art Council, the Director of the Conservatory and the Directorate arises. I herewith beg to renounce my honorary membership in the St. Petersburg Branch.

N. Rimsky-Korsakoff.

March 24.

P. S. Several hours before the Directorate meeting of March 19, at which my

dismissal was decided upon, I had received, from one of the members of the Directorate, a letter containing the following lines: "Would it not be more advisable, if, instead of protesting, you agreed, for the sake of calming the passions of youth, to take up the reins of administration, instead of A. R. Bernhard?"—Probably the member of the Directorate held a minority opinion, but signed the resolution, nevertheless. I sent a negative reply.

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